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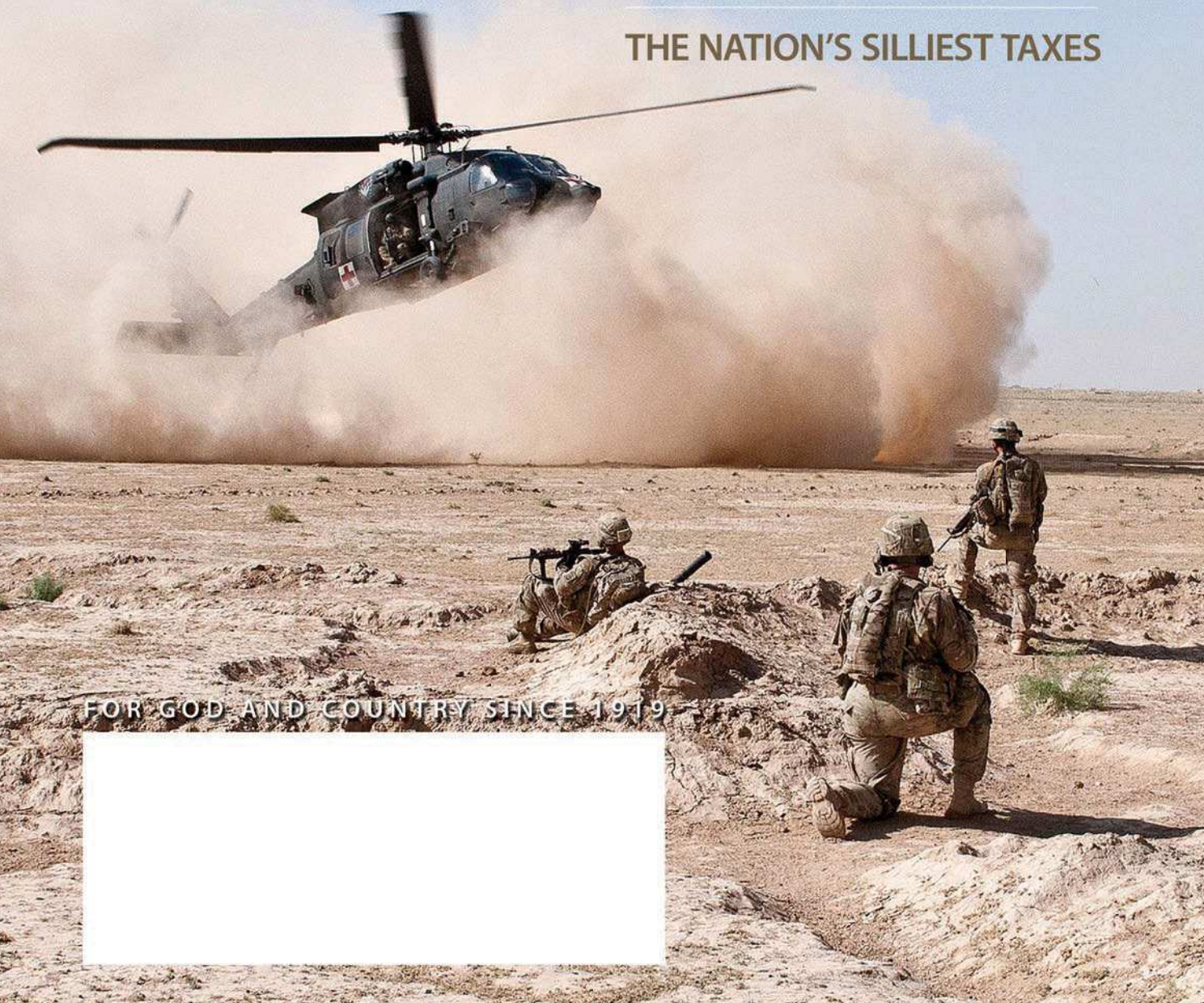

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HELPING HANDS

Storms tore through central Illinois on April 18, causing floodwaters to rise to record levels along the Illinois River and forcing thousands of residents to evacuate their homes. Many found comfort at American Legion Post 235 in Marseilles, Ill., where members helped feed nearly 1,000 flood victims a day after the storm hit. Legionnaires also delivered food and meals to those affected. Photo by Eldon Lindsay

Watch the video: ***www.legion.org/legiontv***

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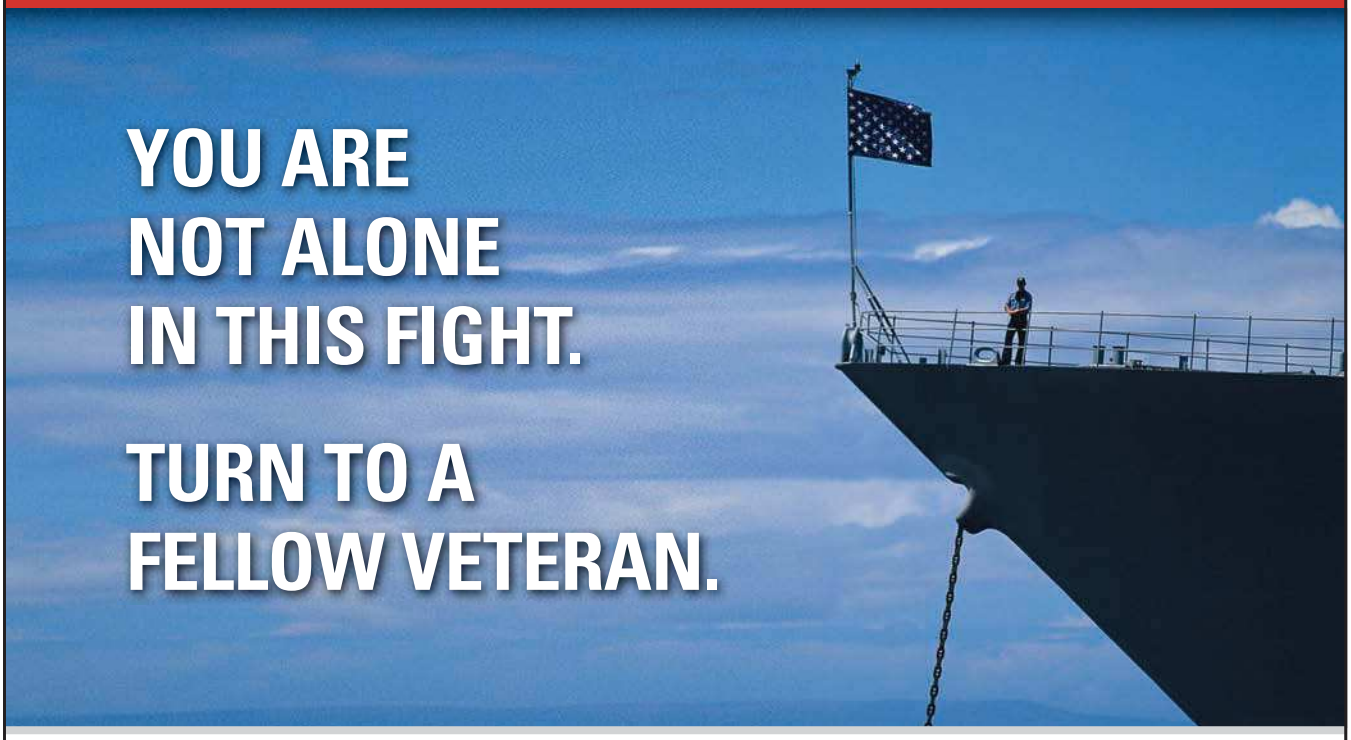

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'The Battle for COP Keating'

I would like to compliment Mark Seavey for his article (May), as well as Jake Tapper, with whom I frequently disagree, though not in these circumstances. More, I would like to praise Staff Sgt. Clint Romesha and the men of Bravo Troop, 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment. Boots and Saddles and a hearty "Garryowen" to you all.

Your effort is in the finest traditions of the American soldier. Like LZ X-Ray and Hamburger Hill in my war, the men on the ground proved their mettle, and the brains in the rear proved that "military intelligence" truly is an oxymoron. In all three cases, we have clear-cut examples of Dien Bien Phu/Little Bighorn thinking. In "The Art of War," Sun Tzu implies that you must hold the high ground, for you will surely perish in the valley. This axiom has proven true in too many situations to catalog.

– Joseph E. Herbert, Toms River, N.J.

When I was in the Army ROTC program at the University of Nebraska in 1962, we were told to never let the enemy have the high ground, for obvious reasons. COP Keating was also trapped by the river behind it. Those who made that decision should be court-martialed.

– Tom Hedges, San Diego

Inept leadership from tactical planners. Eight troops dead for no reason. Sixty troops sit in a bowl, surrounded by mountains crawling with Taliban, with only one way out? Anyone should have viewed this indefensible position and said, "No, we need to rethink this assignment." I sure hope someone was busted over this.

– Joe Murphy, Stockertown, Pa.

Editor's note: Jake Tapper's "The Outpost" discusses the reasoning behind COP Keating's location, including access to the local town by foot patrol. In the firefight's aftermath, several officers were punished for both the selection of that site and inadequate force-protection measures.

'The Gift of Arms'

Ken Olsen's article on transplant patient Brendan Marrocco (May) was very informative and made me rethink my stand on being a donor.

– Fred R. Snowardt Jr., O'Neill, Neb.

Public broadcasting funds

Many big issues face veterans today. PBS and NPR are not one of them (Big Issues, May). I do not believe in censorship of any kind. Remember freedom of speech? As biased as NPR might be at times, it is as much the voice of people as Limbaugh, Palin, Stern and Hannity are.

– A.E. Ringwood, Maryland, N.Y.

The question is whether the government has the right to fund public broadcasting. It certainly does not, even if it gave only 1 cent a year. The government's only purpose is to protect our sovereignty, property rights, life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. This is why we have a separation of church and state, and why we should have a separation of commerce and state.

– Michael A. Bonfiglio, Chicago

'Vietnam's Combat Trackers'

I was one of the first 50 U.S. soldiers to attend the tracking course at the British Jungle Warfare School (JWS) in Malaysia in 1967. I served as the noncommissioned officer in charge of Combat Tracker Team 5 in the 1st Infantry Division and was awarded a Bronze Star. Upon completion of my tour I returned to JWS, where we modified the program to better reflect the lessons learned in Vietnam by early tracker teams.

Ken Olsen's article (May) accurately reflects the training atmosphere and combat experiences of the deployed tracker teams. However, I believe some things were overstated. Running through a field with a telephone pole and running up to kick a latrine were not part of the program. And rather than half of the NCOs washing out, attrition for the course was less than 10 percent. Due to funding issues, the program was critically monitored, and remedial training and counseling ensured the Army got its money's worth. If we are going to tell our story, we need to tell it right.

– Christopher C. Hodge, Nixa, Mo.

I read this article with great interest. The description of the use of Labrador retrievers by combat tracker teams in Vietnam was especially insightful. But the ultimate treatment of these magnificent dogs was pitiful and dishonorable. They were abandoned, and their fates left to Asian societies with attitudes toward dogs that were quite different from Americans'.

One soldier had his request to keep a dog denied by the Army, which cited the risk of spreading diseases it may have acquired during the mission. The trackers are still upset by this ruling. Who refused to keep the dogs and bring them to the United States for further use? The Army area commander? The Department of Defense? The State Department? It certainly was not the combat trackers.

– Charles Paoli, Bronx, N.Y.

'The Importance of Remembrance'

I enjoyed the message from National Commander Jim Koutz (May). He is so right. I am a 94-year-old World War II veteran who served in North Africa and Italy. After the Italians joined the Allies, I worked with a British officer to set up the first military mission to the Italian army in Rome. As we came up the boot of Italy, we were allowed to stop at the U.S. cemetery near Anzio and walk through it. It was so sad to see all the white crosses, and to this day I have heard very little about it. I hope Anzio is remembered this year.

– Sam Hardman, Knoxville, Tenn.

VA wait times

Tom Philpott got it right when he emphasized two long-standing weaknesses of outpatient hospitals and clinics: wait times and access to care (Veterans Update, May). I've been fighting multiple myeloma, a rare blood cancer, for five years. Thanks to the VA clinic in Viera, Fla., and the VA hospital in Orlando, I'm still fighting the good fight.

No matter how early my appointment for blood work, I had a wait of about 15 minutes, standing in line just to check in. I don't know what was more difficult, the waiting or the standing, but it was frustrating to know that I'd have to wait 90 minutes more to have my blood drawn. Since my chemotherapy's side effects are a low white blood cell count and fatigue, it was extremely tiring and painful to sit for long periods of time.

In March, VA brought in a ticket machine. Now we pull a number and are served within minutes. The results of my labs are sent to the oncologist in Orlando via computer, and I can get news on the next steps in my treatment within 24 hours. This is what I call timely care.

– Fred DiFrancesco, Melbourne, Fla.

The last paragraph of this article certainly leaves doubt as to whether or not William Schoenhard of the Veterans Health Administration really believes there is a problem in the medical appointment process: "Pressed for his reaction, Schoenhard said that 'gaming' of data, if that's what GAO found, 'is entirely unacceptable ... And when that is visible to us we will take appropriate action.'" How much more proof does he need?

– Lyle Puppe, St. Paul, Minn.

Editor's note: In "VA Steps Up Diabetes Prevention Efforts" (Living Well, May), Donnie Williams' daily walking goal should have been stated as 15,000 steps per day, or about seven miles.

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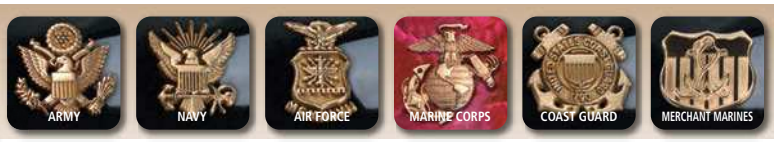

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Zero tolerance for military sexual assault

In May, the officer who ran the Air Force's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office was arrested for groping a woman in a parking lot. Ten days later, the Army announced it was investigating a sergeant who was responsible for handling cases of sexual assault at Fort Hood, Texas. These incidents occurred in the wake of a high-profile sexual assault case at Aviano Air Base in Italy and a sex-abuse scandal at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas.

Small wonder that Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel promptly issued a directive to all services for a stand down on sexual assault prevention and response. Those involved in such work are to have their credentials and qualifications reviewed, and to undergo refresher training.

A week earlier, The American Legion issued its own response to the problem of military sexual assault (MSA). On May 9, our National Executive Committee passed Resolution No. 9, calling on Congress to pass a bill that would "prohibit convening authorities from dismissing or setting aside a finding of guilty" in MSA cases. It also urges the defense secretary to "order an independent review of convening authorities' powers to determine their appropriateness, relevancy and effectiveness in courts-martial proceedings."

Hagel's directive, along with new policies issued by DoD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, are well-intentioned but don't go far enough. The temptation for convening authorities to countermand guilty verdicts needs to be eliminated in MSA cases. This is the best way for courts-martial to be free from meddling by misguided commanding officers or their representatives.

Beyond the Legion's calls to Congress and DoD for specific actions, our resolution also calls on the services to "dismantle any military culture that condones, tolerates or otherwise allows sexual assault among servicemembers as an acceptable form of behavior."

MSA statistics are staggering; to stand by as they worsen would be shameful. A recent Pentagon report estimated that 70 servicemembers are sexually assaulted every day. It also noted that approximately 26,000 MSAs took place in 2012 – a jump of about 35 percent since 2010.

What does it feel like for men or women to have to share the same dining hall, office or barracks with someone who has raped them? Tens of thousands of our veterans and servicemembers can tell you. This heinous trend must be stopped by decisive action and commitment that pays much more than lip service to the concept of "zero tolerance."

We agree with Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey: MSA "betrays the trust on which our profession is founded." We also agree with Hagel, who warned that MSA endangers the military's ability to recruit and perform its mission. Any mindset that encourages or excuses such unspeakable acts must be rooted out and destroyed.

Most MSA victims are reluctant to press charges out of fear that their superiors will retaliate, their unit will ostracize them or investigators won't take their cases seriously. They are left without justice.

The Pentagon must do whatever it takes to remove sexual assault from military culture. Zero tolerance is The American Legion's position.

James E. "Jim" Koutz

National Commander James E. Koutz

MEMORANDA

SPRING MEETINGS

While convened in Indianapolis May 6-9, the National Executive Committee passed 29 resolutions spanning Legion programs and policies. Those resolutions are available to view in the Digital Archive at **archive.legion.org**, or by contacting the Legion Library at **(317) 630-1356** or **library@legion.org**.

BOYS NATION LIVE ONLINE

On July 19, nearly 100 young men will gather at Marymount University in Arlington, Va., for Boys Nation. They'll experience the political process firsthand by organizing committees, passing bills, and electing a president and vice president. Candidate debates, elections, the closing senate session and graduation will be streamed live at **www.legion.org**.

www.legion.org/boysnation

ADOPT A UNIT

American Legion posts are encouraged to connect with local National Guard and reserve units to ask how they can can support those serving and their families. Contact the Internal Affairs Division at **(317) 630-1321** or **ia@legion.org** for more information.

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I AM THE AMERICAN LEGION

"The American Legion is a great patriotic organization. Not only do (Legionnaires) care about veterans, but they care about their families, and that is important to me."

MARK H. OCHSENBEIN

BRANCH OF SERVICE: Army

YEARS: 1977-1998

MOS: Military Police, Special Operations (Green Beret) and Aviation

RANK AT DISCHARGE:
Lieutenant colonel

DECORATIONS

- Bronze Star
- Meritorious Service Medal with silver, bronze oak leaf clusters
- Air Medal with "V" device
- Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters
- Army Achievement Medal
- Southwest Asia Service Medal
- Korea Defense Service Medal
- Humanitarian Service Medal
- Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia)
- Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait)
- Master Aviator Badge
- Master Parachutist Badge
- Air Assault Badge
- Special Forces Tab
- Honduras Jump Wings
- Thailand Jump Wings
- Thailand Balloon Jump Wings

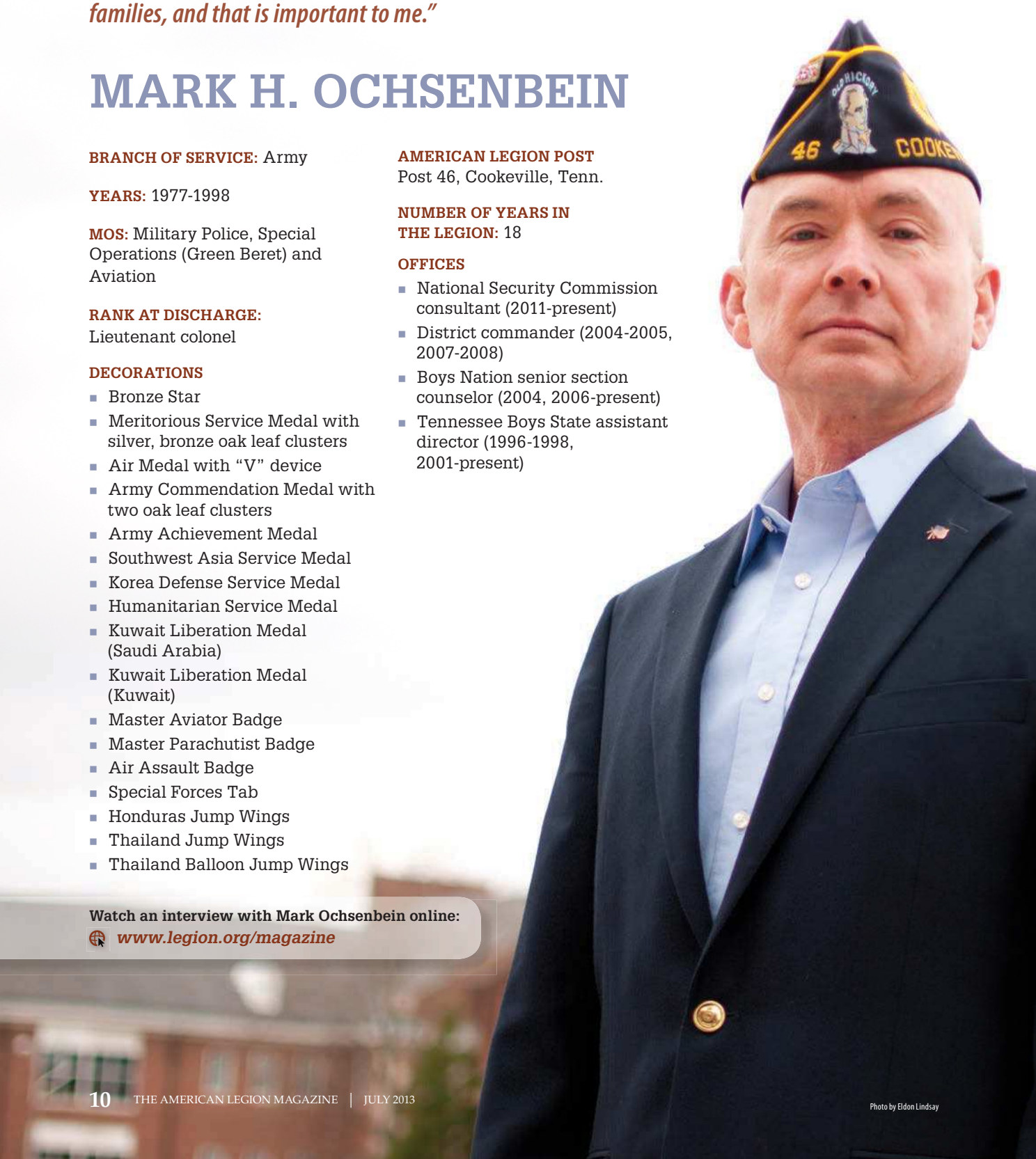
AMERICAN LEGION POST
Post 46, Cookeville, Tenn.

NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE LEGION: 18

OFFICES

- National Security Commission consultant (2011-present)
- District commander (2004-2005, 2007-2008)
- Boys Nation senior section counselor (2004, 2006-present)
- Tennessee Boys State assistant director (1996-1998, 2001-present)

Watch an interview with Mark Ochsenbein online:
www.legion.org/magazine



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[1]Based on the 2011 Member Communications Trend Survey. Use of the term "member" or "membership" does not convey any eligibility rights for auto and property insurance products, or legal or ownership rights in USAA. Ownership rights are limited to eligible policyholders of United Services Automobile Association. The term "honorably served" applies to officers and enlisted personnel who served on active duty, in the Selected Reserve or National Guard and have a discharge type of "Honorable." Eligibility may change based on factors such as marital status, rank or military status. Contact us to update your records. Adult children of USAA members are eligible to purchase auto or property insurance if their eligible parent purchases USAA auto or property insurance. Property and casualty insurance products are available to current and former military members and their former dependents who meet certain membership eligibility criteria. To find out if you are eligible, contact USAA. Underwriting restrictions apply. Automobile insurance provided by United Services Automobile Association, USAA Casualty Insurance Company, USAA General Indemnity Company, Garrison Property and Casualty Insurance Company, USAA County Mutual Insurance Company, San Antonio, TX, and is available only to persons eligible for P&C group membership. Each company has sole financial responsibility for its own products. The American Legion receives financial support from USAA for this sponsorship. © 2013 USAA. 139071-0413

Comprehensive immigration reform

SUPPORT

Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham, D-N.M.

■ Lujan Grisham is a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

The time to address our broken immigration system is now, and we need to get it right. A bipartisan group in the Senate started this process by proposing a clear pathway to citizenship that will finally give thousands of families living in the shadows the opportunity to fully participate in our society and workforce.

I am encouraged by the Senate immigration bill, which allows spouses and children to immediately immigrate to the United States with the rest of their family instead of waiting behind while their cases are processed. The legislation would create a new type of visa allowing family members abroad to visit relatives in the United States for up to 60 days every year, so that families may spend holidays together or offer support during life-changing events. It would also permit relatives awaiting permanent residency to continue living and working here. Strengthening and promoting the family unit should be a priority as we reform the immigration system.

We must also address DREAMers and people who have applied for status under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. I have met with some of these young immigrants, who were brought here as children. Many have graduated from college and are ready to join the workforce and become citizens. We should give them the opportunities they deserve. Fortunately, the Senate bill offers an expedited path toward citizenship to DREAMers and children younger than 16.

Immigration reform will improve the well-being of families, grow the economy and create jobs. Most importantly, it will allow millions of workers and families the opportunity to openly participate in our society. But it's going to take political courage and leadership to make these changes.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Supporters of immigration reform say that a clear pathway to citizenship will bring millions of people out of the shadows. Critics say the plan would only exacerbate illegal immigration, and that U.S. borders must be secured first.

OPPOSE

Rep. Lou Barletta, R-Pa.

■ Barletta is a member of the House Committee on Homeland Security.

We have been presented with a false choice in the debate over illegal immigration. On one hand, we are offered the Obama plan, which offers permanent residency after a shockingly long eight years of probation. On the other, we have the "Gangs of Eight" in both the House and Senate. Both plans are unacceptable, and fail to address the causes of illegal immigration and the massive costs associated with legalizing millions of people who have already broken our laws.

As mayor of Hazleton, Pa., I passed an ordinance that suspended the licenses of businesses that knowingly hired illegal aliens and enforced similar penalties on landlords who knowingly rented property to them. These common-sense solutions are still tied up in court.

In 1986, we were told that if we granted amnesty to 1.5 million illegal aliens, we would secure the border and be rid of the problem. More than 3 million came forward. Today, we are to believe there are about 11 million. That number is sure to double when we wave the carrot of citizenship to the world, as history has proven.

The Heritage Foundation estimates that even after taxes are collected from new residents, the cost in social programs will exceed $2.6 trillion over 20 years.

There should not, and cannot, be a plan to address the millions of illegal aliens here until we secure the borders. Unfortunately, the real losers in this debate could be legal immigrants who chose to live in our country to improve their lives and those of their families. They will have obeyed our laws only to see untold millions of illegal aliens emerge to compete for jobs, opportunities and resources that are already scarce.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Honorable *(name)*, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 • Phone: (202) 224-3121
The Honorable *(name)*, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • Phone: (202) 225-3121

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Safety in the surf

HealthDay has some safety tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics for family trips to the beach.

- Swim within sight of a lifeguard.
- Stay in designated areas.
- Never swim alone.
- If caught in a rip current, swim parallel to the shore.
- Drink plenty of noncarbonated and nonalcoholic fluids, especially water, before thirst and dehydration kick in.

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

BEAT THE BLUES

BY MARTIN SAYERS

Depression is the modern malaise, with an estimated one in four Americans coping with it at some point. Yet many are reluctant to discuss the condition with medical professionals or friends and family.

But depression is highly treatable, with a number of methods available to help sufferers. There is some debate as to the best treatment because depression varies in causes, effects and severity. Help is out there, though, so if you feel a low mood developing into something more serious, try some of these methods to help you bounce back.

Talk to someone Confiding in a close friend or family member about how you feel can be beneficial. Many people suffering from depression will put on a brave and happy face for the world even though they feel desolate inside. This can actually exacerbate the problem by making them feel isolated and lonely.

Change your diet Scientists have begun to draw parallels between diet and rising levels of depression. The mind, just like the body, needs a broad range of nutrients to function properly. Upping your intake of fruit, vegetables and oily fish such as salmon and sardines could make you feel a lot happier. You should also cut down on fatty and sugary foods, which can make you feel lethargic and depressed.

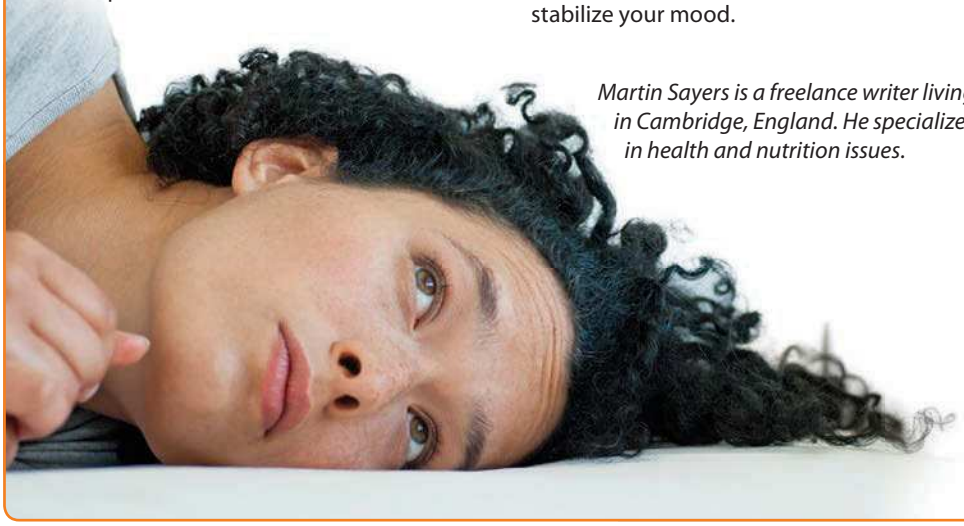
Are you depressed? Six telltale signs

- Tiredness and loss of energy
- Loss of self-confidence and self-esteem
- Inability to take pleasure in things you normally find enjoyable and interesting
- Feelings of hopelessness and pessimism
- Loss of appetite
- Difficulty sleeping

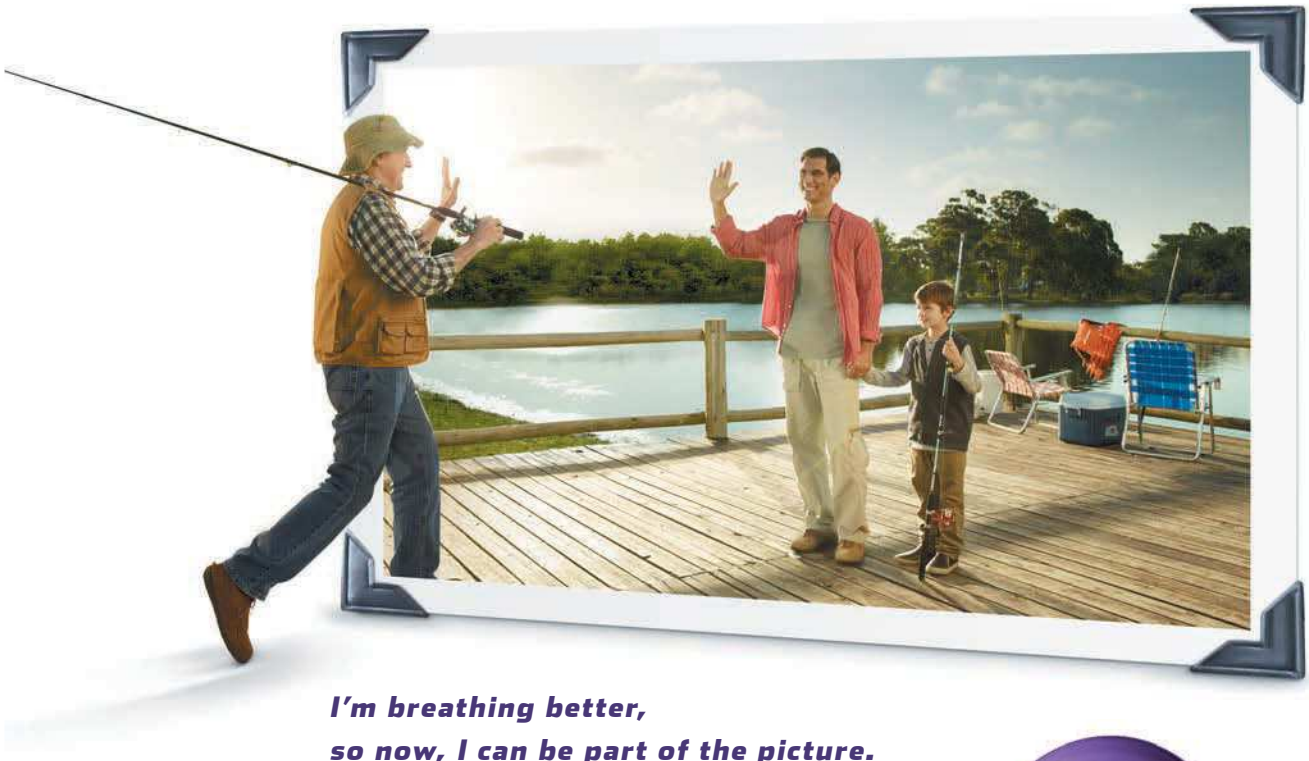
Certain foods have even been shown to have specific mood-enhancing properties. Research by the mental health charity Mind found that eating bananas tends to make depressed people feel more cheerful. This is due to the presence of tryptophan, a protein that the body converts to serotonin. Serotonin promotes a feeling of calm well-being and helps regulate mood.

Get some exercise Research suggests that exercise can have a dramatic effect on depression, as it releases serotonin into the bloodstream. It can also be used to set personal goals – such as losing weight or getting fit – that can boost confidence levels and act as a useful distraction from depressive thoughts. Doing something as simple as going for a walk or swim each day can have a positive effect on your mood.

Seek medical advice If you feel that your depression is particularly severe – leading to an inability to function properly and/or suicidal thoughts – seek medical advice. Doctors can prescribe therapy as well as prescribe antidepressant drugs that can help stabilize your mood.



Martin Sayers is a freelance writer living in Cambridge, England. He specializes in health and nutrition issues.



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ADVAIR helps improve your lung function so you breathe better. ***Results may vary.*** *Unlike most chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) medications, ADVAIR contains both an anti-inflammatory† and a long-acting bronchodilator working together to help improve your lung function. ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 is approved for adults with COPD, including chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both. ADVAIR DISKUS is not for, and should not be used to treat, sudden, severe symptoms of COPD. ADVAIR won't replace a rescue inhaler. You should only take 1 inhalation of ADVAIR twice a day. Higher doses will not provide additional benefits. Ask your doctor about ADVAIR.*

ADVAIR DISKUS® 250/50
(fluticasone propionate 250 mcg and salmeterol 50 mcg inhalation powder)

Important Safety Information about ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50

- Do not use ADVAIR to treat sudden, severe symptoms of asthma or COPD. Always have a rescue inhaler medicine with you to treat sudden symptoms.
- Do not use ADVAIR DISKUS if you have severe allergy to milk proteins. Ask your doctor if you are not sure.
- **Do not use ADVAIR more often than prescribed. Do not take ADVAIR with other medicines that contain long-acting beta$_2$-agonists for any reason.** Tell your doctor about medicines you take and about all of your medical conditions.
- **ADVAIR DISKUS can cause serious side effects, including:**
  - **serious allergic reactions.** Call your healthcare provider or get emergency medical care if you get any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction: rash; hives; swelling of the face, mouth, and tongue; breathing problems.
  - **sudden breathing problems immediately after inhaling your medicine.**
  - **effects on heart:** increased blood pressure; a fast and irregular heartbeat; chest pain.
  - **effects on nervous system:** tremor; nervousness.
  - **reduced adrenal function (may result in loss of energy).**
  - **changes in blood (sugar, potassium, certain types of white blood cells).**
  - **weakened immune system and a higher chance of infections.** You should avoid exposure to chickenpox and measles, and, if exposed, consult your healthcare provider without delay. Worsening of existing tuberculosis, fungal, bacterial, viral, or parasitic infections, or ocular herpes simplex may occur.
  - **lower bone mineral density.** This may be a problem for people who already have a higher chance of low bone density (osteoporosis).
  - **eye problems including glaucoma and cataracts.** You should have regular eye exams while using ADVAIR.
  - **pneumonia.** People with COPD have a higher chance of getting pneumonia. ADVAIR may increase the chance of getting pneumonia. Call your doctor if you notice any of the following symptoms: increase in mucus (sputum) production; change in mucus color; fever; chills; increased cough; increased breathing problems.
- **Common side effects of ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 for COPD include:** thrush in the mouth and throat, throat irritation, hoarseness and voice changes, viral respiratory infections, headache, muscle and bone pain.

*Measured by a breathing test in people taking ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50, compared with people taking either fluticasone propionate 250 mcg or salmeterol 50 mcg. Your results may vary.

†It is not known how anti-inflammatories work in COPD.

‡Restrictions apply. See ADVAIRCOPD.com for eligibility rules.

Please see Brief Summary of Important Safety Information about ADVAIR DISKUS on adjacent page.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

To get your first full prescription free and to save on refills‡ visit ADVAIRCOPD.com or call 1-877-200-4673.

GSK for you — If you don't have prescription coverage and can't afford your medicines, visit GSKforYou.com or call 1-866-GSK-FOR-U (1-866-475-3678)

GlaxoSmithKline

ADVAIR DISKUS®
(fluticasone propionate and salmeterol inhalation powder)

BRIEF SUMMARY

This summary does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment. See full Prescribing Information for complete product information.

What is the most important information I should know about ADVAIR DISKUS?

ADVAIR DISKUS can cause serious side effects, including:

1. **People with asthma who take long-acting beta$_2$-adrenergic agonist (LABA) medicines, such as salmeterol (one of the medicines in ADVAIR DISKUS), have an increased risk of death from asthma problems.** It is not known whether fluticasone propionate, the other medicine in ADVAIR DISKUS, reduces the risk of death from asthma problems seen with salmeterol.
- **Call your healthcare provider if breathing problems worsen over time while using ADVAIR DISKUS.** You may need different treatment.
- **Get emergency medical care if:**
  - breathing problems worsen quickly and
  - you use your rescue inhaler medicine, but it does not relieve your breathing problems.
2. ADVAIR DISKUS should be used only if your healthcare provider decides that your asthma is not well controlled with a long-term asthma control medicine, such as inhaled corticosteroids.
3. When your asthma is well controlled, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking ADVAIR DISKUS. Your healthcare provider will decide if you can stop ADVAIR DISKUS without loss of asthma control. Your healthcare provider may prescribe a different asthma control medicine for you, such as an inhaled corticosteroid.
4. Children and adolescents who take LABA medicines may have an increased risk of being hospitalized for asthma problems.

What is ADVAIR DISKUS?

- ADVAIR DISKUS combines an inhaled corticosteroid medicine, fluticasone propionate (the same medicine found in FLOVENT®), and a LABA medicine, salmeterol (the same medicine found in SEREVENT®).
  - Inhaled corticosteroids help to decrease inflammation in the lungs. Inflammation in the lungs can lead to asthma symptoms.
  - LABA medicines are used in people with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). LABA medicines help the muscles around the airways in your lungs stay relaxed to prevent symptoms, such as wheezing and shortness of breath. These symptoms can happen when the muscles around the airways tighten. This makes it hard to breathe. In severe cases, wheezing can stop your breathing and cause death if not treated right away.
- ADVAIR DISKUS is used for asthma and COPD as follows:

Asthma

ADVAIR DISKUS is used to control symptoms of asthma and to prevent symptoms such as wheezing in adults and children aged 4 years and older.

ADVAIR DISKUS contains salmeterol (the same medicine found in SEREVENT). LABA medicines, such as salmeterol, increase the risk of death from asthma problems.

ADVAIR DISKUS is not for adults and children with asthma who are well controlled with an asthma control medicine, such as a low to medium dose of an inhaled corticosteroid medicine.

COPD

COPD is a chronic lung disease that includes chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both. ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 is used long term, 2 times each day to help improve lung function for better breathing in adults with COPD. ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 has been shown to decrease the number of flare-ups and worsening of COPD symptoms (exacerbations).

Who should not use ADVAIR DISKUS?

Do not use ADVAIR DISKUS:

- to treat sudden, severe symptoms of asthma or COPD.
- if you have a severe allergy to milk proteins. Ask your doctor if you are not sure.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before using ADVAIR DISKUS?

Tell your healthcare provider about all of your health conditions, including if you:

- **have heart problems**
- **have high blood pressure**
- **have seizures**
- **have thyroid problems**
- **have diabetes**
- **have liver problems**
- **have osteoporosis**
- **have an immune system problem**
- **are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.** It is not known if ADVAIR DISKUS may harm your unborn baby.
- **are breastfeeding.** It is not known if ADVAIR DISKUS passes into your milk and if it can harm your baby.
- **are allergic to any of the ingredients in ADVAIR DISKUS, any other medicines, or food products**
- **are exposed to chickenpox or measles**

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. ADVAIR DISKUS and certain other medicines may interact with each other. This may cause serious side effects. Especially, tell your healthcare provider if you take ritonavir. The anti-HIV medicines NORVIR® (ritonavir capsules) Soft Gelatin, NORVIR (ritonavir oral solution), and KALETRA® (lopinavir/ritonavir) Tablets contain ritonavir.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist each time you get a new medicine.

How do I use ADVAIR DISKUS?

Do not use ADVAIR DISKUS unless your healthcare provider has taught you and you understand everything. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have any questions.

- Children should use ADVAIR DISKUS with an adult's help, as instructed by the child's healthcare provider.
- Use ADVAIR DISKUS exactly as prescribed. **Do not use ADVAIR DISKUS more often than prescribed.** ADVAIR DISKUS comes in 3 strengths. Your healthcare provider has prescribed the one that is best for your condition.
- The usual dosage of ADVAIR DISKUS is 1 inhalation 2 times each day (morning and evening). The 2 doses should be about 12 hours apart. Rinse your mouth with water after using ADVAIR DISKUS.
- If you take more ADVAIR DISKUS than your doctor has prescribed, get medical help right away if you have any unusual symptoms, such as worsening shortness of breath, chest pain, increased heart rate, or shakiness.
- If you miss a dose of ADVAIR DISKUS, just skip that dose. Take your next dose at your usual time. Do not take 2 doses at one time.
- Do not use a spacer device with ADVAIR DISKUS.
- Do not breathe into ADVAIR DISKUS.
- **While you are using ADVAIR DISKUS 2 times each day, do not use other medicines that contain a LABA for any reason.** Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if any of your other medicines are LABA medicines.
- Do not stop using ADVAIR DISKUS or other asthma medicines unless told to do so by your healthcare provider because your symptoms might get worse. Your healthcare provider will change your medicines as needed.
- ADVAIR DISKUS does not relieve sudden symptoms. Always have a rescue inhaler medicine with you to treat sudden symptoms. If you do not have an inhaled, short-acting bronchodilator, call your healthcare provider to have one prescribed for you.

Call your healthcare provider or get medical care right away if:

- your breathing problems worsen with ADVAIR DISKUS
- you need to use your rescue inhaler medicine more often than usual
- your rescue inhaler medicine does not work as well for you at relieving symptoms
- you need to use 4 or more inhalations of your rescue inhaler medicine for 2 or more days in a row
- you use 1 whole canister of your rescue inhaler medicine in 8 weeks' time
- your peak flow meter results decrease. Your healthcare provider will tell you the numbers that are right for you.
- you have asthma and your symptoms do not improve after using ADVAIR DISKUS regularly for 1 week

What are the possible side effects with ADVAIR DISKUS?

- **ADVAIR DISKUS can cause serious side effects, including:**
- **See "What is the most important information I should know about ADVAIR DISKUS?"**
- **serious allergic reactions.** Call your healthcare provider or get emergency medical care if you get any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction:
  - rash
  - hives
  - swelling of the face, mouth, and tongue
  - breathing problems
- **sudden breathing problems immediately after inhaling your medicine**
- **effects on heart**
  - increased blood pressure
  - a fast and irregular heartbeat
  - chest pain
- **effects on nervous system**
  - tremor
  - nervousness
- **reduced adrenal function (may result in loss of energy)**
- **changes in blood (sugar, potassium, certain types of white blood cells)**
- **weakened immune system and a higher chance of infections**
- **lower bone mineral density.** This may be a problem for people who already have a higher chance of low bone density (osteoporosis).
- **eye problems including glaucoma and cataracts.** You should have regular eye exams while using ADVAIR DISKUS.
- **slowed growth in children.** A child's growth should be checked often.
- **pneumonia.** People with COPD have a higher chance of getting pneumonia. ADVAIR DISKUS may increase the chance of getting pneumonia. Call your healthcare provider if you notice any of the following symptoms:
  - increase in mucus (sputum) production
  - change in mucus color
  - fever
  - chills
  - increased cough
  - increased breathing problems

Common side effects of ADVAIR DISKUS include:

Asthma:

- upper respiratory tract infection
- throat irritation
- hoarseness and voice changes
- thrush in the mouth and throat
- bronchitis
- cough
- headache
- nausea and vomiting

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In children with asthma, infections in the ear, nose, and throat are common.

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AD5799R0 July 2012

Media Bakery

PITCH COUNT

There's no better time than baseball season to remind parents and coaches of young pitchers that there can be real and lasting consequences to overworking a child's throwing arm.

"Parents may find it difficult to put limits on any activity that a child is good at and enjoys performing," says Dr. Michael Freehill, an assistant professor of orthopedics at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, N.C. "But when it comes to pitching, the surest way to ruin a young athlete's chances of success is to allow him or her to overdo it."

As reported by *HealthDay*, bones, muscles and tissues in most kids are not fully developed until the age of 16, so too much pitching can lead to injury. Freehill offers several tips for parents and coaches:

- Before throwing, young pitchers should stretch and run. After that, "throwing should start with easy tosses, followed by gradual increases in distance and then intensity."
- Young pitchers should focus on "age-appropriate pitching skills, with an emphasis on control, accuracy and good mechanics."
- Parents and coaches should make sure that the child stays within age-specific pitch-count limits.
- "Rest periods between pitching sessions are important. Children can still play, but only at positions other than pitcher and catcher."
- Parents should not allow children to pitch for multiple teams with overlapping schedules. Nor is year-round baseball advisable.
- Parents, coaches and other adults should explain that telling a coach about discomfort while throwing is always the right thing to do.

Cancer-fighting foods

Health recommends five common foods that can help lower your risk of cancer.

Carrots are full of carotenoids, an antioxidant group that may help prevent rectal cancer.

Grains contain folic acid, which helps ward off birth defects and can lower the risk of colon cancer.

Cooked tomatoes contain lycopene, which may lower prostate cancer.

Garlic may lower the risk of colon, stomach and breast cancers.

Fiber-rich foods – cereals, vegetables, legumes – appear to have colon cancer-fighting properties.

Media Bakery

VA releases draft report on Gulf War care

BY TOM PHILPOTT

Veterans of the Persian Gulf War were exposed to a poisonous stew of environmental, chemical and biological dangers, which left thousands suffering from illnesses difficult to diagnosis or treat effectively.

These dangers included long-burning oil fires; destroyed stocks of chemical and biological agents; use of depleted uranium tank rounds; pesticides; special paints used to resist chemical agents; reported side effects from anthrax vaccines and pills intended to protect against deadly agents; nine varieties of infectious diseases; and blowing sand, dust and other particles that caused respiratory problems.

It took years for the U.S. government to acknowledge these combinations of harmful exposures. VA now presumes that certain chronic, unexplained symptoms, if present for six months or more, are related to Gulf War service and compensable. These include chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, gastrointestinal disorders and various undiagnosed illnesses.

Oil well fires blaze out of control outside Kuwait City on March 23, 1991. Smoke has long been considered a factor in many Gulf War veterans' undiagnosed illnesses. Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. David McLeod

Yet 20 years on, many Gulf War veterans still complain that VA physicians are surprised by their ailments or provide ineffective treatment. VA concedes knowledge and treatment gaps and that primary care providers are not well versed on the chronic, multisymptom illnesses of this group.

On May 13, the Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses Task Force published in the *Federal Register* its most recent draft comprehensive report on ongoing efforts and new innovations. It is a "draft" report because the task force sought public comment, particularly from veterans, through June 13.

"I am scared that I am going to die or be in some serious medical problems before I hear anything back from anyone," read the first electronically filed comment, posted by a veteran who said she returned from the war with headaches and was later diagnosed with lupus and Sjögren's syndrome, as well as fibromyalgia and muscle spasms.

This third annual roadmap identifies gaps in services and the steps being taken to close them. Another goal is to apply the lessons learned in the handling of Gulf War veterans to improving services to post-9/11 veterans. The report also identifies seven areas of effort, two of which are in clinical care and provider education. The push is to integrate Gulf War specialty medical treatments into VA primary care to produce a more patient-centric approach to treatment.

Given the varied symptoms many Gulf War veterans display, and the difficulty in pinpointing causes of illnesses, the report says primary care providers need more help recognizing mental problems in veterans "as separate and distinct from physical health problems."

VA has launched a pilot program at the Salt Lake City VA Medical Center to better integrate mental health care in the primary care setting. By April, more than 60 front-line clinicians had been educated on Gulf War-specific conditions through meetings and conferences, pocket cards that identify common Gulf War exposures and illnesses, and websites with more details on diseases and treatments.

The Veterans Health Administration also seeks to better educate primary care providers on the health effects of environmental hazards during the Gulf War. Usually only clinicians trained in occupational and emergency medicine have this expertise, the report says.

Other task-force initiatives are expected to smooth delivery of compensation, pension and other services to Gulf War veterans; improve data-sharing on these veterans with DoD; and use still-untapped sources of data to better track and understand their health challenges.

Tom Philpott, a Coast Guard veteran, has written about veterans and military personnel issues for more than 30 years.

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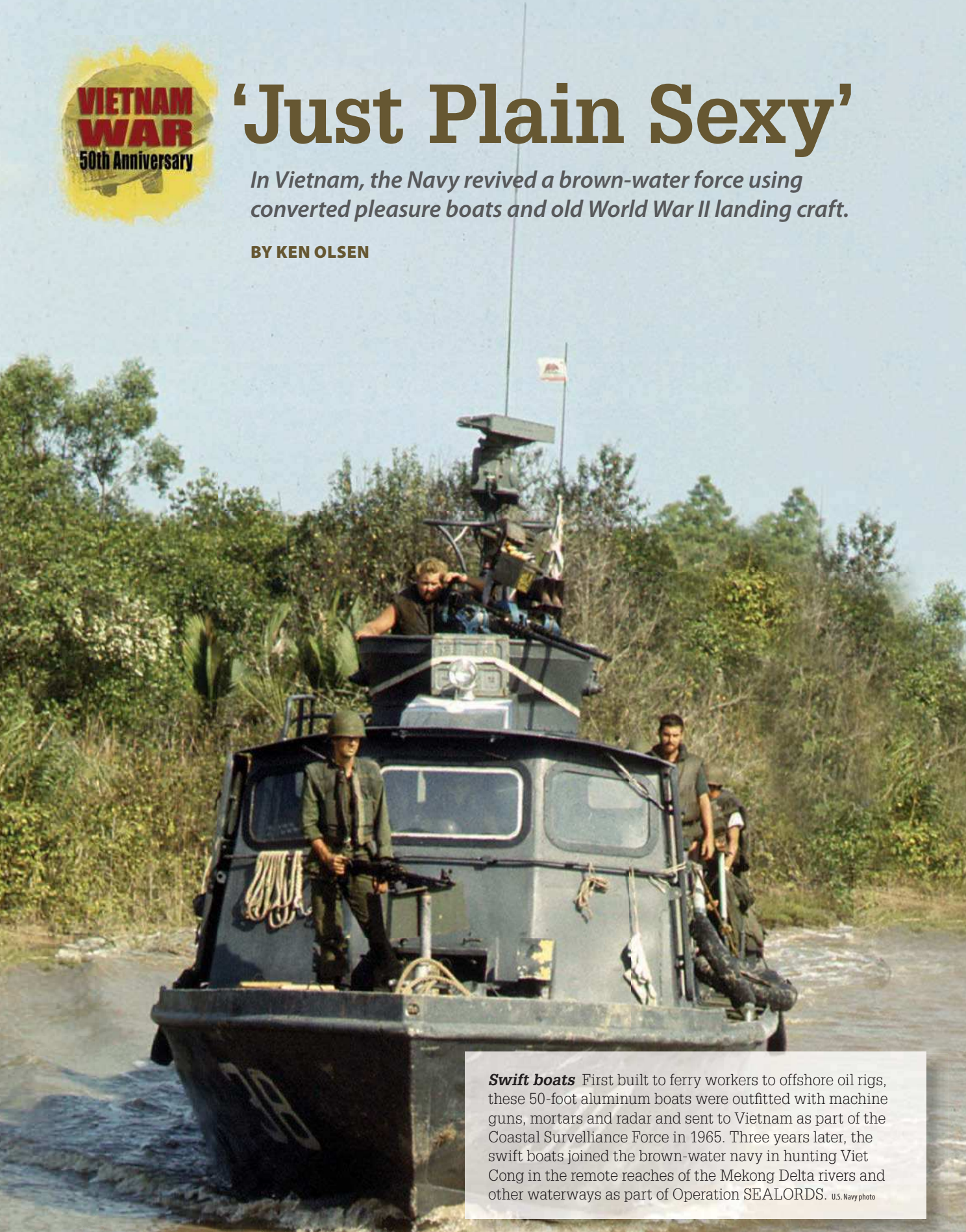
VIETNAM WAR
50th Anniversary

‘Just Plain Sexy’

In Vietnam, the Navy revived a brown-water force using converted pleasure boats and old World War II landing craft.

BY KEN OLSEN



Swift boats First built to ferry workers to offshore oil rigs, these 50-foot aluminum boats were outfitted with machine guns, mortars and radar and sent to Vietnam as part of the Coastal Surveillance Force in 1965. Three years later, the swift boats joined the brown-water navy in hunting Viet Cong in the remote reaches of the Mekong Delta rivers and other waterways as part of Operation SEALORDS. U.S. Navy photo

Chasing the enemy in fiberglass boats powered by Jacuzzi pumps. Deploying dolphins on anti-mine patrols. Dusting off combat tactics rarely used since the Civil War.

This is what the U.S. Navy means when it says it adapted to Vietnam.

While it definitely had carrier, battleship and logistics operations in hand, "the Navy wasn't prepared for the coastal and inland waterway operations in Vietnam," says Ed Marolda, the author of five books and other publications about the Navy's role in Vietnam during his career with the Naval History and Heritage Command. "All the focus at that time was 'How do we defeat the Soviet Navy?'"

Building a fleet to fit the fighting conditions would have taken years. So the Navy relied on converted pleasure boats and old World War II landing craft for combat that more often took place on rivers and narrow inland canals than at sea. And when the United States departed in 1973, it left South Vietnam with one of the world's largest navies.

The Vietnam era was also marked by the creation of the Navy SEALs and the long-running battle to keep the 45-mile-long "Forest of Assassins" shipping channel from Saigon to the sea open. U.S. ships provided gunfire support to ground troops. And Gen. William Westmoreland credited the brown-water navy forces with playing a key role in saving the Mekong Delta during the Tet Offensive. All the while, thousands of Seabees built airfields and fortifications throughout Vietnam, and approximately 50 were killed in action, Marolda says.

For all of this, the Navy's role – especially that of the brown-water navy – went largely unnoticed. "Vietnam was unpopular, so people didn't want to know much about it," says retired Lt. Cmdr. Thomas J. Cutler, author of "Brown Water, Black Berets," who served in Vietnam in 1972. "And it hasn't gotten much attention in Hollywood. Until America sees it on the screen, it doesn't exist."

Beginning to End The Navy first sent advisers to Southeast Asia to help the French in 1950 and stayed to assist the South Vietnamese after the French left. A dozen years later, the blue-water navy began gathering intelligence off the coast of Vietnam. Soon, newly formed Navy SEAL teams were deployed to Vietnam to train South Vietnamese naval commandos and conduct raids.

Meanwhile, the Department of Defense helped send South Vietnamese saboteurs to North Vietnam in Norwegian-made Nasty boats that were valued for their speed, Marolda says. The Navy trained the crews and repaired the boats at Da Nang. Unable to

Mine sweeping boats (MSBs) These wooden-hull minesweepers had a shallow draft and were used to help keep the shipping channel between Saigon and the South China Sea open. U.S. Navy photo

Landing craft World War II-era landing craft were used in a variety of ways during the Vietnam War. Some were used as troop carriers for the Mobile Riverine Force; others were fitted with rounded bows, cannons, machine guns and mortars and used as monitors that could provide close gunfire support. Those with flamethrowers were called Zippo boats. Some were fitted with additional communications gear and used as command boats. U.S. Navy photo

Assault support patrol boats (ASPBs) As the only watercraft built from the keel up for the brown-water navy's use in Vietnam, ASPBs were deployed for minesweeping, troop support and scouting missions. DoD

Patrol Boat, River (PBR) The primary boats in the River Patrol Force, these shallow-draft fiberglass boats – driven by Jacuzzi water-jet pumps – were derived from watercraft built for the civilian market. The Navy equipped PBRs with radar, machine guns and grenade launchers and used them to patrol the rivers of the Mekong Delta and the Rung Sat Special Zone, among others. U.S. Navy photo

Nasty boats U.S.-trained South Vietnamese saboteurs used these Norwegian-built boats to conduct raids in North Vietnam. Valued for their speed, the Nasty boats were armed with 20mm and 40mm cannons. Some also had recoilless rifles and mortars. An operation involving Nasty boats in early August 1964 had a role in provoking the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

WPBs These 82-foot Coast Guard cutters were sent to Vietnam to help intercept North Vietnamese ships smuggling arms and supplies to Viet Cong forces in South Vietnam, as part of Operation Market Time.

catch the Nasty boats after an August 1964 operation, North Vietnamese boats instead fired on the larger, slower USS *Maddox*. That skirmish, inflamed by intelligence that suggested another attack on U.S. forces two days later, became known as the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the spark for the official shooting war, Marolda says. Soon Navy ships and airplanes joined the U.S. Air Force in pounding North Vietnam at President Lyndon Johnson's orders.

Turn by turn, the Navy was drawn further into combat and deeper inside Vietnam. In February 1965, a U.S. Army helicopter pilot discovered a well-camouflaged North Vietnamese trawler unloading arms and ammunition in a South Vietnamese bay. The South's lackluster response to the Vung Ro Bay incident helped prompt the Navy to launch a major arms interdiction effort called Operation Market Time. The Navy purchased boats designed to ferry workers to drilling rigs in the Gulf of Mexico, added weapons and radar, and used these new swift boats to stop and search junks and fishing boats along the South Vietnamese coast. The Navy also brought in the Coast Guard and its coastal patrol ships and smaller boats to stop the arms smugglers.

The combination worked. "North Vietnamese trawlers usually came down at night, staying in international waters, and then made a dash in when they thought the coast was clear," Cutler says. Navy destroyers tracked them on radar from afar and alerted the swift boats and Coast Guard cutters, which intercepted the North Vietnamese boats.

Operation Market Time was so effective that the North Vietnamese were forced to find other ways to arm their insurgency, Marolda says. Arms and ammunition were shipped to Cambodia and trucked to the South Vietnamese border, where they were handed off to Viet Cong forces. They were also hauled south along a network of roads, trails and paths collectively known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Brown Water Revival Meanwhile, the U.S. military turned its attention to the Viet Cong-controlled Mekong Delta, which accounted for a quarter of South Vietnam's geography, half its population and a significant part of its rice production. But the Viet Cong were seizing so much of the crops that South Vietnam was having to import rice, Cutler says.

The Navy had to revive its brown-water forces, used only sporadically since the Civil War, to retake the delta. "To be honest, the Navy got into this reluctantly," Cutler says. "The brown-water navy is the redheaded stepchild."

Reviving the brown-water navy also came with a boat problem. The Navy didn't have a vessel for

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charging up the rivers and canals that fed the Mekong Delta. So it again turned to the consumer market, this time buying shallow-draft leisure boats powered by Jacuzzi pumps. Called PBRs, these were fast and highly maneuverable but lacked armor because it slowed the boats too much. "These things were fairly vulnerable," Cutler says. "They made up for it with firepower – machine guns, mortars and grenade launchers."

The return of the brown-water force was a success, Cutler says. The Navy retook the delta's major rivers.

The brown-water navy was joined by a newly created Mobile Riverine Force that used World War II landing craft to take soldiers from the 9th Infantry Division to the fight. The slow, loud boats made for mixed success, historians say.

Some landing craft were outfitted with rounded bows, cannons, machine guns and mortars, and deployed as "monitors" that covered troop landings up and down the delta. Others were outfitted with tiny flight decks for helicopters, which made them the world's smallest aircraft carriers, Cutler says.

Landing craft equipped with cannons that fired napalm 200 yards into the jungle were nicknamed Zippo boats, Marolda says. Those outfitted with water cannons for washing away enemy fortifications were nicknamed Douche boats.

The only boat built from the keel up for the brown-water navy was the assault support patrol boat (ASPB), a scout boat and minesweeper that supported the main force. "They didn't have enough time to test them," Marolda says, "and if they turned too quickly, the wake could swamp and sink the boat."

SEALORDS By the time Adm. Elmo Zumwalt took charge of the Navy in Vietnam in 1968, the brown-water navy had done such a good job of retaking the southern part of the Mekong Delta that brown-water duty was downright boring, Cutler says. But the Viet Cong had simply moved their arms smuggling and insurgent operations into smaller waterways. Zumwalt's answer: Operation SEALORDS (Southeast Asia Lake, Ocean, River and Delta Strategy).

This all-inclusive approach meant that swift boats were moved from the coast and joined both the River Patrol Force and the Mobile Riverine Force to go after the Viet Cong in the remote reaches of the Mekong Delta and other waterways. "Casualties went way up, but morale also went way up," Cutler says.

SEALORDS resulted in more injuries and deaths than any other Navy duty in Vietnam. Still, cooks, yeomen and all other manner of naval personnel vied for brown-water duty even though it wasn't always good for career advancement.

Amphibious assault ships USS *Iwo Jima*, the first ship of its class built from the hull up, was commissioned in 1961 and carried 77 Army helicopters and crew, Marines, Seabees and tons of supplies to Vietnam in 1965. U.S. Navy photo

Battleships USS *New Jersey* was listed as the Navy's only active battleship when it was sent to provide gunfire support off the coast of Vietnam in 1967. U.S. Navy photo

Cruisers Heavy cruisers such as USS *Newport News* served with distinction in Vietnam, patrolling the coast of North Vietnam during Operation Sea Dragon and providing close gunfire support. U.S. Navy photo

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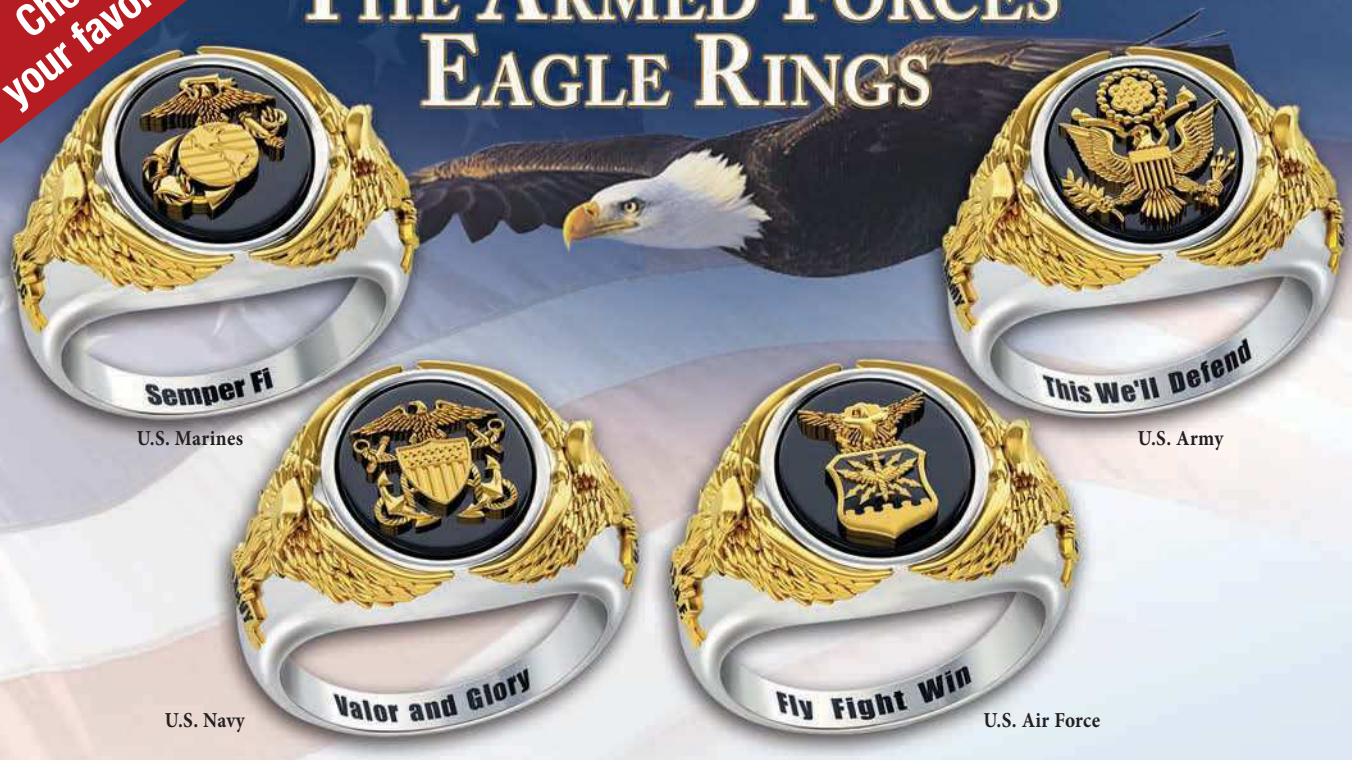

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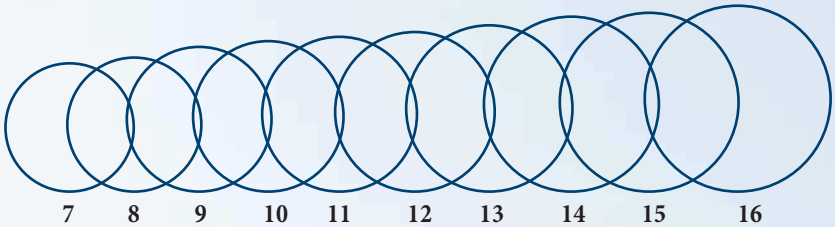

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Destroyers Ships such as USS *Stickell* were assigned to guard aircraft carriers, provide gunfire support for ground troops, conduct search and rescue, and more. U.S. Navy photo

Dolphins These amazing marine mammals were deployed in key South Vietnamese harbors to keep the enemy from mining U.S. ships.

Nuclear-powered aircraft carriers USS *Enterprise* was the world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and the first in combat when it launched aircraft against the Viet Cong near Bien Hoa on Dec. 2, 1965. U.S. Navy photo

"It was just plain sexy," Cutler says. "It doesn't get much more adventuresome than going up a river firing weapons."

Dolphins and whalers In major harbors such as Da Nang and Cam Ranh Bay, meanwhile, the Navy and the Coast Guard worked to keep enemy swimmers from planting mines on the ships that supplied U.S. forces. Cutler spent part of his tour with a team that ran Boston Whalers around the harbors at night, dropping grenades in random patterns. Dead enemy swimmers periodically washed up on shore the next morning, confirming the need for the patrols.

The Navy also used dolphins for this anti-mine duty, Marolda says. Outfitted with special canvas nose covers, the dolphins were trained to hit suspicious swimmers with their snouts.

Finally, the Navy was tasked to patrol the 45-mile stretch of river and swamp between the South China Sea and Saigon. Officially called the Rung Sat Special Zone and unofficially known as the Forest of Assassins, it was a narrow, meandering channel infested with Viet Cong who mined the waterway and fired on passing ships. "We would have had a hell of a time keeping South Vietnam supplied if they had closed that," Marolda says.

Late in the war, the Navy mined Hanoi and other major enemy harbors as part of the U.S. effort to get the North Vietnamese back to the bargaining table with Operation Linebacker. "No ships entered or left those ports from May 1972 until after the Paris Peace Treaty was signed in 1973," Marolda says. The following spring and summer, the Navy went back and cleared the mines as part of the final peace deal.

When the Navy departed in 1973, it left South Vietnam with more than 1,100 vessels, making it one of the largest navies in the world, Marolda says. Thirty of those ships helped thousands of South Vietnamese naval personnel escape to the Philippines after their country fell in 1975. And the Navy's last act in Vietnam was evacuating U.S. diplomats, South Vietnamese and Cambodians who served with U.S. forces, Marolda says.

The Navy's Vietnam experiences informed future conflicts. Many of the Navy officers who led U.S. naval forces in Operation Desert Storm had Vietnam combat experience. And when the Navy decided to reactivate brown-water squadrons in Iraq, it went to the Naval History and Heritage Command to find out what the United States had done in Vietnam, Marolda says. "We still had the operational plans."

Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.

BY ROSS CLARK

Breaking News

Human Body Inspires New Cane

First Cane to Mimic Body's Natural Movement

Despite a rapidly aging population and giant leaps in medical technology, today's walking canes are eerily similar to canes from 2,000 years ago. Until now.

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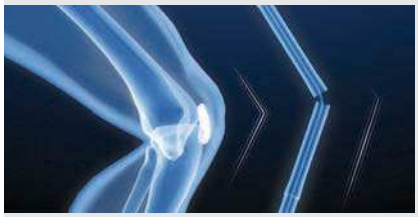

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The DUMBEST TAXES

BY ALAN W. DOWD

At their best, as Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. once observed, "Taxes are the price we pay for a civilized society."

At their worst, they can create a disincentive to work, produce or build. "An unlimited power to tax," as Daniel Webster famously said, "involves, necessarily, a power to destroy."

Somewhere between those extremes, taxes can make us laugh or sigh or cry. Here are just a few examples from across the United States.

PRAY FOR DROUGHT In Maryland, the government is taxing "impervious surfaces" – roofs, driveways and basically any other man-made structure that doesn't allow rainwater to naturally soak into the ground. An outgrowth of a 2010 Environmental Protection Agency mandate to reduce runoff into Chesapeake Bay, this "rain tax" will hit property owners in Maryland's 10 most populous counties.

Maryland business developer Blair Lee projects that a typical homeowner will pay around $100 annually. But since businesses will get soaked "with five- and six-figure amounts because they own such large rooftops and parking lots," Lee notes that taxpayers will get a double-whammy as car dealers, shopping centers, big-box retailers, office buildings and warehouses pass along the costs of complying to their customers.

The rain tax isn't the only revenue source for the Chesapeake Bay cleanup. In what *U.S. News & World Report* calls the "flush tax," Maryland has levied a $2.50 monthly charge on "residents who generate wastewater."

Veer

IT ALL DEPENDS ... Speaking of waste, in Connecticut, children's diapers are subject to tax, but adult diapers are untaxed.

Indeed, inconsistencies in how taxes are applied can cause lots of head-scratching. Consider how Alabama classifies and taxes various kinds of playing cards. A "normal" deck is levied a 10-cent tax (paid by the buyer) and a $1 fee (paid by the seller). But as *U.S. News & World Report* points out, this only applies to decks of 54 cards or less. So a game like UNO is not subject to the card tax.

Or consider how Chicago taxes various kinds of soda. A fountain soda is taxed three times higher than canned soda. By the way, soda guzzlers may want to stock up: various states are mulling a 1-cent-per-ounce tax on sugary drinks. And federal lawmakers considered a 3-cent tax on soda to help fund the new health-care law.

THE TAX BURDEN

YEAR	TAXES AS A PERCENTAGE OF INCOME
2013	29.4 percent
2004	29.3 percent
2000	33.6 percent
1980	30.4 percent
1960	27.7 percent
1940	17.9 percent
1920	12 percent
1900	5.9 percent

Source: The Tax Foundation

FOOD FIGHT Moving from beverages to food, Maine levies a 0.75-cent-per-pound tax on purchases of wild blueberries, while in California fresh fruit is not taxed unless it is purchased from a vending machine, in which case it carries a healthy 33-percent tax.

Food is an area where the taxman has lots of fun. According to *Bon Appétit*, "39 of the 50 states have some kind of sales tax on candy, although what 'candy' means, exactly, is all over the map." In some states, candy with flour is considered a food item while candy without flour is considered, well, candy. Thus, in Iowa, "Milky Ways and Kit Kats don't get taxed, while the Milky Way Midnight, which just happens to ditch flour from the normal Milky Way recipe, is back under the taxman's jurisdiction," the magazine observes.

Veer

As *The Wall Street Journal* reports, such inconsistent definitions cause confusion from Colorado to Illinois. "Retailers in Chicago were unsure if Twix bars – some of which contain flour and peanut butter – were food or candy," according to the *Journal*. If the latter, they are subject to an extra 5-percent sales tax.

Heated foods are often taxed while their unheated counterparts are not. Sliced bagels, as well as bagels with spread toppings, are subject to an 8-cent tax in New York, while unsliced bagels avoid the taxman's greedy hand.

"Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Iowa all tax pumpkins differently depending on whether they're sold as potential jack-o'-lanterns or as future pie fillings," *Bon Appétit* reports. If it's the former, it's taxed.

In Colorado, as *The Fiscal Times* details, "cups are deemed 'essential' and therefore nontaxable." But the lids and cup sleeves for those same cups are subject to tax.

TELL US YOU BROKE THE LAW It seems that the IRS doesn't really care if you break the law, as long as you pay your taxes. "If you steal property," the IRS Tax Guide advises, "you must report its fair market value in your income in the year you steal it, unless in the same year you return it to its rightful owner."

In a similar vein, the IRS requires a taxpayer to report income "from illegal activities, such as money from dealing illegal drugs ... on Form 1040, line 21, or on Schedule C or Schedule C-EZ (Form 1040) if from your self-employment activity." Apparently the taxman is unable to see the futility of expecting someone who is breaking drug laws to observe the tax law by disclosing that he is breaking drug laws.

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From 2005 to 2009, the state of Tennessee found a way around this conundrum. Drug dealers were allowed to pay taxes on their narcotics earnings anonymously at state revenue offices.

HOW THE GRINCH (ALMOST) TAXED CHRISTMAS

In 2011, the Department of Agriculture spawned a special "assessment" of 15 cents per "Christmas tree domestically produced or imported into the United States." The purpose of the tax was "to strengthen the position of fresh-cut Christmas trees in the marketplace." But in response to strong public outcry, the White House ordered agriculture officials to delay implementation of the dreaded Christmas tree tax.

THE "DOUBLE TAX" The estate tax – derided as the "death tax" by its many critics – was implemented at a time when wealth was beginning to concentrate in the pockets of a few mega-rich families. The idea was that such an overconcentration of wealth would not be healthy for America. "We can have concentrated wealth in the hands of a few or we can have democracy," Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis observed. "But we can't have both."

Over time, like so many other forms of taxation, the reach of the estate tax grew to grab the hard-earned wealth of people who weren't really rich at all: family farmers, mom-and-pop store owners, lifelong savers and investors. Today, estates are

taxed at 40 percent upon the estate holder's death, with a $5 million exemption ($10 million for couples).

In one sense, that represents a lot of wealth. But in another sense – using metrics that take into account the value of property, goods and assets that can be amassed over the life of a business, career or marriage – it's not an "unhealthy" concentration of wealth in the 21st century.

Moreover, while large estate holders use loopholes to shield their wealth from the estate tax, that tax often punishes the owners of small businesses, farming families and savers who don't have the ability or wherewithal to exploit those loopholes. This can have a ripple effect well beyond the legatee.

As Curtis Dubay of the Heritage Foundation explains, a business' assets can "make the estate appear valuable on paper and can raise the value of the estate above the threshold over which the estate is subject to the death tax." That often forces survivors to liquidate some or all of the estate's assets. "The forgone assets the business sells to pay the death tax lower its income-generating capability, forcing it to reduce wages or let go some existing workers because of reduced capacity."

Forbes economics writer Charles Kadlec calls the estate tax "dumb, unfair and immoral" because it's "a double tax, falling as it does on whatever assets an individual has been able to accumulate after paying all of the taxes due on the income generated by their work and investments."

108 DAYS

The Tax Foundation pegged this year's Tax Freedom Day – "the day when the nation as a whole has earned enough money to pay its total tax bill for the year" – at April 18. That means we worked 108 days into the year to pay the taxman.

NOT SO FAST Speaking of dumb, the tax law requires certain taxpayers to declare their previous year's state tax refund as income, thus making the refund subject to tax.

DIRTY SECRETS The federal excise tax on cigarettes is $1.01 per pack. The average state excise tax is $1.48 per pack. Taxes on cigarettes are ostensibly aimed at dissuading nonsmokers from picking up this unhealthy habit and encouraging smokers to kick it. But the dirty little secret is that the government needs revenue from cigarette sales to fund various programs, including Medicaid. As *The New York Times* concluded not long ago, federal and state governments are "hooked on tobacco-tax billions."

Veer

The White House has even proposed increasing the federal tax on cigarettes to $1.95 per pack to fund a $66 billion preschool program. Doubtless, state and federal bean-counters are hoping this anti-vice tax is unsuccessful. Otherwise, there will be no revenue to fund these programs.

Perhaps the lesson in all this tax silliness is that taxes should be levied to raise revenue for the necessary functions of government – defending our sovereignty and coining money, building roads and bridges, keeping cops on the beat and bad guys behind bars, ensuring the general welfare – and not to score political points or punish legal activities.

Perhaps it's time yet again, as President John F. Kennedy urged in 1963, to "restore an idea that has helped make our country great – that a person who devotes his efforts to increasing his income, thereby adding to the nation's income and wealth, should be able to retain a reasonable share of the results."

Alan W. Dowd is a contributing editor for The American Legion Magazine.

ARE YOUR FEDERAL INCOME TAXES TOO HIGH, OR ABOUT RIGHT?

YEAR	TOO HIGH	ABOUT RIGHT
2013	50	45
2008	52	42
2003	50	46
1999	68	28
1994	56	42
1990	63	31
1985	63	32
1973	65	28
1962	48	45
1952	71	26
1949	43	53

Source: Gallup

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"The Lord must have directed him across that road to where I was. Why would he come across there just to save one man like that?"

Former POW Herbert Miller, describing to *Military Times* how he was seconds from being shot between the eyes by a Chinese soldier when Kapaun pushed the enemy aside

Father (Capt.) Emil Kapaun

Legendary priest is the sixth chaplain to receive the Medal of Honor.

On April 11, Army chaplain Emil Kapaun posthumously received the Medal of Honor, nearly 63 years after his actions at the Battle of Unsan in Korea. But it's what he did after being taken captive by the enemy that has the priest up for another rare honor: Catholic sainthood.

In 1993 Father Kapaun was named a "servant of God," a title bestowed on a deceased person whose life and works are being investigated in consideration for official recognition by the pope and the Roman Catholic Church as a saint. The Vatican continues to review Kapaun's record.

Held captive in a prison camp near Sombakol for the last six months of his life, Kapaun survived on a meager diet of millet and cracked corn, but nonetheless freely shared his food, his faith and his strength with the men around him. As the morale of others began to fade, Kapaun began sneaking out of the compound and stealing food from the village – something he was uncomfortable doing, but which his comrades say saved many lives. This earned Kapaun the nickname of "the good thief," and his fellow Catholics in camp would pray to St. Dismas, the penitent thief crucified beside Jesus, for the priest's safe return when he went out to gather food for the starving prisoners.

An eight-part series on Kapaun in *The Wichita Eagle* illustrates the faith, perseverance and, perhaps surprisingly, humor that marked the priest's time as a POW. Overheard praying one day, Kapaun was interrupted by a Chinese guard.

"Don't ask God for your daily bread," the officer demanded. "Ask Mao Zedong. He's the one who provides your daily bread."

"If this is an example of God's daily bread," Kapaun replied, "then God must be a terrible baker."

In May 1951, weakened by fever and dysentery, the guards isolated Kapaun from the other prisoners, leaving him to die in a nearby shack dubbed the "Death House." As the Americans – Catholic, Jewish, Protestant and agnostic alike – took their leave in tears, one man expressed his sorrow for the chaplain. "You're sorry for me?" Kapaun responded. "I am going to be with Jesus Christ. And that is what I have worked for all my life. You should be happy for me." He was last seen praying for, and forgiving, his captors.

In his 1954 book "The Story of Chaplain Kapaun: Patriot Priest of the Korean Conflict," Father Arthur Tonne says the hero's legacy "cannot be contained in memorials, however costly or beautiful. It is a treasure for the human soul – the spirit of one who loved and served God and man, even unto death."

KAPAUN'S MEDAL OF HONOR CITATION

Chaplain Emil J. Kapaun distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving with the 3d Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division during combat operations against an armed enemy at Unsan, Korea, from November 1-2, 1950.

On November 1, as Chinese Communist Forces viciously attacked friendly elements, Chaplain Kapaun calmly walked through withering enemy fire in order to provide comfort and medical aid to his comrades and rescue friendly wounded from no-man's land. Though the Americans successfully repelled the assault, they found themselves surrounded by the enemy. Facing annihilation, the able-bodied men were ordered to evacuate. However, Chaplain Kapaun, fully aware of his certain capture, elected to stay behind with the wounded. After the enemy succeeded in breaking through the defense in the early morning hours of November 2, Chaplain Kapaun continually made rounds, as hand-to-hand combat ensued. As Chinese Communist Forces approached the American position, Chaplain Kapaun noticed an injured Chinese officer amongst the wounded and convinced him to negotiate the safe surrender of the American Forces. Shortly after his capture, Chaplain Kapaun, with complete disregard for his personal safety and unwavering resolve, bravely pushed aside an enemy soldier preparing to execute Sergeant First Class Herbert A. Miller. Not only did Chaplain Kapaun's gallantry save the life of Sergeant Miller, but also his unparalleled courage and leadership inspired all those present, including those who might have otherwise fled in panic, to remain and fight the enemy until captured.

Chaplain Kapaun's extraordinary heroism and selflessness, above and beyond the call of duty, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 3d Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, the 1st Cavalry Division, and the United States Army.

Chaplain (Capt.) Emil Kapaun, right, and Capt. Jerome Dolan, a medical officer with the 8th Cavalry Regiment, assist an exhausted soldier off the battlefield in Korea early in the war. Photo courtesy ACME

The Decline of Dustoff

Medal of Honor Huey pilot bemoans today's medical air-evacuation process.

BY PATRICK H. BRADY

Joe Kline Aviation Art, © 2000

"When I have your wounded."

Those words set the standard and example for generations of Dustoff crews, which provided helicopter aeromedical evacuation from the battlefield. They were also the death rattle of Maj. Charles Kelly. In terms of lives saved, his sacrifice was perhaps the most productive U.S. combat death ever. Kelly's story may be instructive in demonstrating the shabby state of evacuation and care of wounded warriors today.

A World War II veteran, Kelly was in command of the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) in Vietnam in 1964. At the time, the 57th covered Vietnam with five UH-1 helicopters, better known as "Hueys." The primary mission was recovery of U.S. casualties. Nearly 16,000 GIs were in country, mostly as advisers, and they suffered few casualties. Thus, the 57th did not fly a lot.

Although patients had been moved by helicopter in World War II and Korea, there was no doctrine on the control and use of Dustoff in combat. Kelly's boss, Brig. Gen. Joe Stilwell (son of the famous "Vinegar Joe" – we called him "Cider Joe," but not to his face), had put the 57th helicopters under a transportation unit. This was a scheme doomed to fail, and it quickly did. The transportation guys were not trained as medics; that's why they were called transportation soldiers. A helicopter ambulance is a medical resource, and all medical resources had been under medical control since the Civil War.

But Stilwell was determined to control the 57th birds. Shortly after Kelly's arrival, Stilwell announced that he would use portable red crosses for medical missions and remove them for ash-and-trash missions. Kelly was outraged, and the two men went toe-to-toe. Stilwell said he would take his case to the surgeon general, who was his friend. Kelly replied that he might be a friend, but he was no damn fool. Kelly had been shot and almost died in World War II. He was morally and physically fearless. He had also been court-martialed three times and cared more about doing what was right than about his career.

I was in the unit when Kelly returned from his meeting with Stilwell. After warning that the higher-ups did not wish us well, he said that if we were to save Dustoff we had to prove we could rescue patients better than anyone else. He led the way, and we tried to follow. Our helicopters were moved to the areas of heaviest combat. Kelly marketed us, covering the countryside to tell our advisers that we were there for all casualties, day and night – and on the battlefield. Up to this time there had been little night flying. Reaction time is immeasurable in life-saving. Why must a patient wait for sunup when helicopters fly just as well – actually, better – at night, and the crew is safer from enemy fire?

Our casualty load increased significantly, breaking all previous records. Kelly became a legend, flying up to 150 hours a month. Entire villages turned out for his pickups, and a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer began covering him. Because our night missions were unprecedented, many actually thought that Dustoff was specially trained for night flying. One commander ordered a study into how we did it, which concluded that night operations were too dangerous. But Dustoff defeated those dangers every night.

Dustoff pilots, of course, were not specially trained. But through repetition, we became specialists in combat pickups at night, in weather and under fire. Through trial and error, we found ways to get patients with an alacrity previously unknown. If we encountered a situation beyond our capability we could call Kelly, but we never left a patient in the field; the welfare of the patient was our universe. We were a free-enterprise operation. Individual initiative ruled. We determined the risk (although I don't remember ever hearing that word) by launching immediately and flying to the site. We had our own radio frequency and call sign and dealt directly with the grunts at the pickup site. There were no middlemen. Although we had three categories of patients – urgent, priority and routine – we responded to all calls instantly if we had the resources. This is the only way to prevent overclassification. It was unheard of to use two ships – a "gaggle" – or to waste time waiting for gunships except in extreme situations. Area security was undefinable, and a waste of time, between grunt and crew. We set a simple definition: stand up and help us load, and we will come in.

The issue of portable red crosses was still pending in late June 1964 when, as Stilwell was

leaving country, Kelly presented him with a plaque listing our tail numbers. "Here, General," Kelly said. "You wanted my helicopters so damn bad, take them." Stilwell smiled.

The issue was decisively settled a few days later.

On July 1, Kelly was called into a supposedly secure area for an urgent U.S. patient. As he came to a hover, the enemy – mixed in with friendlies, as they often were – cut loose. The friendlies screamed at Kelly to get out. He replied stubbornly, "When I have your wounded."

He then curled up from a single bullet shot right through his heart, the 149th American to die in Vietnam. The ship curled with him and the rotors beat it to pieces.

The entire U.S. and Vietnamese hierarchies attended Kelly's funeral. Stilwell wept when told of his death. In a December 1966 *McCall's* article titled "A Gift of Love," Gen. William Westmoreland chose Charles Kelly out of thousands as a beautiful example of "the greatness of the human spirit." He said Kelly was "a living legend" who stood out among those who gave "America more than they have taken from her ... for when the going gets rough, and an extra ounce of effort is needed, Maj. Kelly's last words still shine brightly: 'When I have your wounded.'"

We never heard again of portable red crosses, and more helicopter ambulance units were programmed for Vietnam. Westmoreland agreed that we could do our mission better than anyone else, and we kept the resource. The medical helicopter was firmly under medical control, as it should be.

Inspired by Kelly, Dustoff became the most revered and effective battlefield operating system in Vietnam, with close to 1 million souls rescued and unprecedented survival records. Indeed, Dustoff did the most dangerous flying in Vietnam, with crews readily willing to risk their lives at any time for the grunts who risked theirs every day.

In the words of Gen. Creighton Abrams, Army chief of staff from 1972 to 1974, "A special word about the Dustoffs ... Courage above and beyond the call of duty was sort of routine to them. It was a daily thing, part of the way they lived. That's the great part, and it meant so much to every last man who served there. Whether he ever got hurt or not, he knew Dustoff was there." And Dustoff continued to perform magnificently well beyond Vietnam, in Operation Just Cause in Panama, Operation Desert Storm, and in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Dustoff's unique qualities were spectacularly evident in the famous Bat 21 tragedy in Vietnam, where Dustoff was absent. The Air Force spent 11 days, at the cost of 11 lives and several aircraft, trying to rescue one man. They called it their largest ever search-and-rescue mission, but there was no search. They knew where he was and had radio contact. It is hard to imagine that there was a man on the ground moving about for 11 days, in radio contact, and no helicopter could pick him up. Any Dustoff crew would have had the man out posthaste as they had thousands of others in the same terrain.

With the formation of the Aviation Branch, a Stilwellian effort was made to eliminate Dustoff aviators and absorb the mission. It failed because the leadership – including Gen. John Wickham, Army chief of staff from 1983 to 1987, and Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf – had experienced and knew the value and skill of Dustoff as it was designed.

By 2005, most if not all of the vast aviation skill from Vietnam had washed out of the military. Coincidentally, we began to hear about bewildering and alarming changes to Dustoff. From no discernible operational or mission shortfall, Dustoff was put under the control of Combat Arms Aviation, a move certain to have made Charles Kelly turn over in his grave. The Army finally did what he died to prevent.

After the change, I visited a USO where a soldier turned his back on me when I told him I was once a Dustoff pilot. His friend had died because Dustoff took too long to respond. This is but one of many stories I have heard from pilots in the field who say that patients have suffered because of delays in launching Dustoff – delays that are inexcusable.

The launch standard in my unit in Vietnam was two minutes, and mission completion averaged half an hour. Under the new system, some commanders were so ignorant of reaction time in lifesaving that they confused a patient priority with the golden hour and set two hours as the standard. Thankfully this was changed back to one hour, but the birds were taking more than 20 minutes to get off the ground.

According to the new standard, "risk management (not patient well-being) shall be the primary consideration in the planning and execution of every activity." And the risk management is done far from the action. The middlemen rule. Mission requests now go through a long and tortured evaluation process while the patient waits. The pilots from my era never heard the term, although they certainly managed risk on every mission. They managed risk on the spot, not subject to

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Afghan soldiers race wounded civilians toward a U.S. Army medical evacuation helicopter in Kandahar. Dustoff crews from Charlie Company, 6th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment flew more than 300 missions during last summer's fighting season, transporting patients to military hospitals at Kandahar Airfield. Getty

some remote staffer with a futile matrix mixing art and science in a manner that did nothing but delay the launch and endanger the patient. Imagine a fire truck delaying its reaction while someone assesses the weather, traffic and heat of the flames, or waits for a police escort. Do these people think you can actually remotely measure risk or eliminate it from combat? Do they think aviators should face less risk than grunts?

Along with the primacy of risk assessment over patient welfare came the gaggle, two-ship missions and mandatory gunship escorts, none of which did a thing for patients. What it did was increase maintenance and crew exposure if there was a risk. There is no way a chase ship can prevent a shootdown, nor can a gunship secure most areas. Blogs and various publications are full of ill-informed stories on the fruits of arming Dustoff. Patients have died as Dustoff waited for armed escorts, and that is both tragic and unnecessary. There is no need to arm Dustoff beyond what's needed to protect crew and patient.

To illustrate the current aviation ignorance of Dustoff, I'll describe an aviation general's praise of an Apache evacuation of a patient. The Apache holds two people. They took one pilot out and crammed the patient into his seat, separating the patient from the medic on site and en route to care. We haven't treated patients like that since the pods in Korea. One can only pray the patient's condition was not serious; regardless, this was irresponsible.

Why change Dustoff? Are the battlefields in the war on terrorism more demanding and dangerous than those of Vietnam? Are the pilots less competent? Were the birds taking more hits and casualties than in Vietnam? The answer to all the questions is no. Dustoff had been performing magnificently, by any measure. More importantly, have the changes helped patients? The patients were not considered.

The truth is that the changes are driven by command-and-control issues, risk obsession, CYA and ignorance of the uniqueness of Dustoff. The lack of a champion, ignorance and medical department leadership are contributing factors (one high-ranking medical general had never heard of Charles Kelly). More tragically, unlike with many changes in the Army, subject-matter experts – wise men, white hairs – were not consulted on the change.

Along with others, I have written a book on Dustoff operations, titled "Dead Men Flying." Had the Army consulted experienced Dustoff crewmen, especially those from Vietnam, they would have learned that these changes were tried and failed. Incredibly, I heard there was not even a test of principle. The change was rammed through.

Time will tell, but I cannot imagine why we have implemented a system that was unproven, untested and guaranteed to lengthen the time between wounding and the hospital. Yet that is what happened. None of the rationales I have heard for the changes included one mention of the patient. Not one. No one can explain to me how these changes will benefit our wounded soldiers. The solution to patient evacuation begins and ends with patient needs – totally absent from the rationales, the mania with risk, behind the changes. It's said that survival rates are better than ever. If so, it is not because of reaction time. However good the care, if it could be better, it is not good enough. We can only pray that Army leaders will come to their senses and end this madness.

Patrick H. Brady is a retired Army major general and Medal of Honor recipient. He commanded the 57th Medical Detachment A and the 54th Medical Detachment during the Vietnam War. He flew more than 2,000 combat missions and evacuated more than 5,000 wounded.

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‘Tired of Excuses’

House committee chairman wants solutions to VA’s problem keeping up with claims and demand for mental health care.

BY JEFF STOFFER

Photo by Eldon Lindsay

Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., has begun to regard VA’s explanations about its growing backlog of undecided disability claims not so much as explanations but as excuses. He is also irritated that VA has not been able to significantly reduce veteran suicides, despite increased funding and attention to mental health care as more than 25 percent of combat veterans serving in Iraq and Afghanistan come home diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

The claims backlog and mental health have topped the agenda of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs chairman through the first six months of the 113th Congress. And neither issue is close to being scratched off his list.

Nearly 1 million VA benefits claims are now caught in the backlog – undecided 125 days or more after application. The average waiting time is approximately 270 days. Some cases take a year or longer.

Miller also wants to know why a 40 percent increase in staffing for VA mental health care has merely stopped the veteran suicide rate from increasing. “While the number of veterans seeking VA mental health has most certainly grown over the last decade, one number has stayed constant during that time: veteran suicides,” Miller told attendees of the 53rd American Legion Washington Conference in late February. “Any time a veteran who fought our enemies abroad and helped defend America from within our borders dies from their own hand, it’s completely unacceptable. It’s not enough that the veteran suicide problem isn’t getting any worse. It isn’t getting any better.”

To resolve VA’s difficulties keeping up with growing demand for services – whether timely adjudication of claims or the availability of mental health care – “it’s going to take a collective effort,” he said at the conference.

Miller recently spoke with *The American Legion Magazine*.

The VA claims backlog has been a problem for years. Why is it getting so much attention now?
America wants to see the issue resolved. It is becoming an extremely hot topic in all media outlets because people don’t understand why the backlog is as big as it is.

Some veterans suspect that the backlog is a deliberate effort to control federal costs. Can you see their point?
It is very easy to see how a veteran who is sick, has earned a disability but has to wait years to receive it, can feel – like they are being slow-walked to a decision. I don’t think that’s the case, but I certainly can understand how someone can feel that way.

What is the primary problem?
If you go back to 1997, you had one caseworker who was handling (something like) 138 cases. Today you’ve got three times the number of people handling half the cases. That makes no sense in anybody’s calculation. Granted, there are more complex claims coming in. But VA knows they are more complex. If I hear one more time that the

backlog is because of the Nehmer claims (cases eligible for retroactive compensation due to the recent acceptance of new diseases and conditions as linked to Agent Orange exposure), I'm going to go to the top of the Capitol and scream. They knew this was going to bring additional work into the system. They didn't plan for it. How can you not understand that there's going to be an immediate rush for claims from a group of veterans who you know is going to be making a claim? And then not plan ahead for the returning OIF/OEF community as well?

Wasn't the plan to separate the new Agent Orange claims and fast-track them?

They separated them OK. They started pushing everything to the side and started taking the (new Agent Orange) claims. I feel very certain that's what they've done.

And now the new excuse is the IDES (Integrated Disability Evaluation System, a largely paper-based process). I was in Baltimore and I asked, "What is the problem?"

"Well, we've got this IDES system, and that has really caused a backlog."

Look, it's been several years – five, six years – and you're still blaming that? What's the next excuse going to be? America is tired of excuses for this ever-increasing backlog that is not serving the veterans community.

What is going to solve the problem?

It's the people. It's still the people who are going to solve the problem. Not a program. It is individuals who understand their job and execute it in a timely and appropriate fashion, and have an attitude that they really want to help.

We have 300,000 employees in the Department of Veterans Affairs. The vast majority of them are hard-working individuals who are there for the right reasons. We've got some people in VA who need to go someplace else. That's from the highest levels of leadership all the way to the people in the mail room who are inputting documents. If they can't see why they are part of the problem, then they need to move out of VA. Not the typical VA (approach of) "We'll move you to some other position," which is what VA does all the time.

Some VA regional offices around the country operate very efficiently and seem to stay on top of the claims applications they receive. Why are there such differences, one area to the next?

There is a culture within the system: individuals will outwait those who have oversight authority, whether it is leadership in the (VA) central office or oversight from Congress.

A rater at Togus (Maine) should rate the same way somebody rates in Baltimore. That's not happening. You should be able to pick any single person up out of a claims office and move them all the way across the country and plug them right in. They should be able to pick up a file and rate that claim, and it should be the same way on either end of the country. And it's not right now.

Backlog on the front burner

On Feb. 27, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Jeff Miller promises those gathered at the 53rd American Legion Washington Conference that the VA backlog and greater accessibility to mental health care for veterans are his top two priorities. He calls on VA to "formulate a realistic plan" to reduce the backlog and stresses bipartisan collaboration to solve VA's problems keeping up with the demand for services. "It transcends party politics ... Without a doubt, it's going to take a collective effort."

On March 20, Miller calls for the resignation of Veterans Benefits Administration Undersecretary Allison Hickey, the top VA official over disability claims, and threatens to cut funding for department employees due to VA's inability to reduce the backlog.

At a March 21 hearing, The American Legion recommends specific actions for VA to reduce the backlog:

- Repair a system that gives VA employees the same work credit regardless of whether a claim has been processed correctly or incorrectly.
- Develop a system to aggregate common errors made in claims processing, and use the information to create a training plan for employees.
- Hire more veterans, to increase understanding of the military among those who work claims.

An American Legion online survey of more than 2,500 veterans shows that 42.3 percent of those waiting on claims decisions have been waiting between one and two years. The survey also indicates that more than 55 percent had not heard from VA regarding their claim status in more than six months.

On April 19, VA announces plans to expedite processing of disability claims that have been pending one year or longer. Hickey announces in a May House Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing that the initiative has already cut the backlog of oldest claims – two years and older – by more than half.

On May 8, Miller introduces legislation that would impose a five-year ban on year-end bonuses for VA executives, due in part to the backlog. "Unfortunately, it's taken the national crisis that is the benefits backlog, and a media firestorm surrounding the department's bonus scandal, for VA leaders to realize that rewarding failure only breeds more failure," Miller says on the day he drops the bill.

On May 16, VA annnounces plans to mandate overtime for claims processors working out of 56 regional offices nationwide.

On May 21, VA, the Legion and Disabled American Veterans announce a collaboration to reduce the claims backlog through the Fully Developed Claims (FDC) Community of Practice. The announcement comes after Legion visits to regional offices in Denver, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and other cities to assess problems and identify best practices for claims processing.

Can Congress and VA work together on this?
No matter how long someone is in a position, we all ought to work together. That's why I have pledged to work with the secretary to try to help him in any way we can. I and Mike Michaud, the ranking member (D-Maine, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs), are doing it in a bipartisan fashion. I have been very careful not to put this specifically on the desk of the secretary because I don't believe he is fully informed by his team as to the severity of the problem.

Mental health has also been high on your agenda.
Twenty veterans a day commit suicide. That is not acceptable in any part of this world, let alone the United States of America.

But some measurable progress has been made, correct?
The last hearing we had on mental health, VA wanted to talk about how well things were going, and their comparative (analysis) was that the seriousness of the calls coming into the crisis lines was decreasing. While that may seem like a good metric for a bureaucrat, VA is assuming that all suicidal veterans are contacting their hotline. My concern is that they are not contacting the hotline, or they are contacting another hotline, or their church or somebody else.

What if VA simply cannot handle the volume?
VA has got to accept the fact that this issue is larger than they are. If a veteran cannot get timely access to mental health, we have to open the system up to allow them to go somewhere else. That's only if they can't get into the VA system ... I'm not trying to dismantle the VA system. I am trying to supplement their network of providers.

My fear is that some veteran is going to need help, and they're going to be prevented from getting that help because of the bureaucracy. And they're going to take their life. That is a stain on this country.

What kind of delays are veterans experiencing?
VA will tell you it's 50 days (to get an evaluation). I would say that number is manipulated. I will say that if (veterans) call and express suicidal tendencies, they will get to see somebody. The person who suffers from depression hears, "We'll get to you when we get to you."

Are VA's processes getting in the way of performance?
VA seems to be more concerned with checking boxes and systems than the number of veterans who are helped. Mental health is an immediate need. And the sheer aggravation of trying to get into the system is probably a trigger for some veterans in accelerating the severity.

You have proposed using TRICARE providers where needs are unmet.
For many years – this includes the veterans service organizations – they have been hesitant to embrace allowing veterans to go outside the system because there was a fear that it was a dismantling of VA. That is not anybody's intention. I do think VA provides world-class health care. We are just trying to supplement, to catch as many veterans as possible, as quickly as possible, to allow them to get the care they need.

Jeff Stoffer is editor of The American Legion Magazine.

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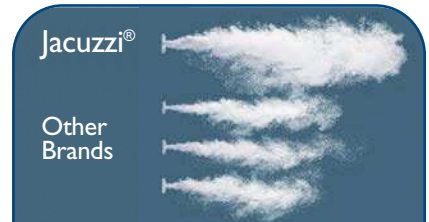

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Photo by Jeff Stoffer

‘Back on American soil’

Thirty-eight years after they lost their lives in what is regarded as the last battle of the Vietnam War, 13 U.S. servicemembers came home in May. Fragments of their remains were laid to rest together, in one casket, at Arlington National Cemetery.

“They may be gone, but they’re back on American soil,” said Marian Boyd of Norfolk, Va., whose son, Marine Pfc. Walter Boyd, was among those remembered at the service. Families of the 10 Marines, two Navy corpsmen and one Air Force chopper pilot gathered with surviving veterans of the operation and others to pay homage.

The May 15, 1975, military mission to rescue the crew of the merchant ship SS *Mayaguez* off the coast of Cambodia turned into a deadly 14-hour battle with the Khmer Rouge less than three weeks after the fall of Saigon. Forty-one Americans – the last 41 names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall – died in the battle that ultimately led to the safe return of the merchant ship and crew.

The 13 buried at Arlington in May were on board a CH-53 Sea Stallion chopper that was shot down off the shore of Koh Tang Island. Thirteen others escaped the shootdown by swimming out to sea, where they were rescued by the Navy.

The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command conducted no fewer than 10 recovery efforts between 1991 and 2008 to find and retrieve the remains of the 13 who went down. DNA testing confirmed the last of the fallen men, Marine Pfc. Daniel A. Benedett of Seattle, in January.

The final 13

Marine Pfc. Daniel A. Benedett
Marine Pfc. Lynn Blessing
Marine Pfc. Walter Boyd
Marine Lance Cpl. Gregory Copenhaver
Marine Lance Cpl. Andres Garcia
Marine Pfc. James J. Jacques
Marine Pfc. James R. Maxwell
Marine Pfc. Richard Rivenburgh
Marine Pfc. Antonio R. Sandoval
Marine Pfc. Kelton R. Turner
Navy Hospital Corpsman Bernard Gause Jr.
Navy Hospitalman Ronald J. Manning
Air Force 2nd Lt. Richard Vandegeer

Read more and see a video about the service: *www.legion.org/honor*

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LEGIONNAIRES IN ACTION

A PLACE AND A TABLE

Arizona Legionnaire pours all he has into a furniture bank for homeless veterans.

BY KEN OLSEN

Richard Coffee was surprised to find a bed, couch and TV in the apartment that a Phoenix homeless coalition lined up for him last year.

"The place is gorgeous," the 53-year-old Army veteran says. A lot of veterans who get VA-subsidized housing "move into a place and it's empty. No furniture. Nothing."

Coffee ended up on the streets after the recession cost him his mechanic job in 2008. A recovering alcoholic, he had been living in a shelter for a year when a housing program called Project H3 VETS found him a place to stay. Things as simple as a table, chairs and shower curtain are critical to keeping veterans like him in their apartments.

"It's the difference between housing them and having them walk," says Shane Groen, special initiatives manager with the Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness, which runs Project H3 VETS. "Without furniture, these guys sit on a blanket on the floor. It's isolating and lonely, and they want to go back to the shelter." Or the streets.

Coffee and more than 100 other homeless veterans are living in furnished places thanks to Legionnaire Jim Piscopo and his wife, Donna, who started the Bridging AZ Furniture Bank to help families moving out of shelters.

Jim, who belongs to Post 44 in Scottsdale, gave up a successful business to start the furniture bank.

Jim and Donna Piscopo sold their home and borrowed from friends to fund their furniture bank for homeless veterans.

"It was a really hard decision," he says. "But this needed to be done."

A native of Detroit, Jim started a contracting business in the Phoenix area when he left the Air Force in 1985. Ten years ago, Jim gave up contracting and the couple sold their home to help fund the furniture bank.

A few months later, the Piscopos visited a Minnesota furniture bank for pointers, and launched Bridging AZ in 2004. For a while they operated out of storage units, but soon they needed a warehouse where donated furniture could be cleaned, repaired and displayed. Banks wouldn't finance the purchase, so they used money from the sale of their home and borrowed from friends to make a down payment.

Over the past decade, Bridging AZ has distributed more than 200,000 items worth an estimated $5.2 million. Half the recipients are veterans, and half are other people in need. Bridging AZ charges either $5 or $10 for large pieces of furniture. "It doesn't matter too much to our bottom line," Jim says of the fee. "It matters to the clients. In the past, what they got was charity. Now they are buying it. They own it and they value it."

Before the economy soured, he had seven employees. The entire staff now consists of Jim, Donna, and an employee who picks up, cleans and repairs furniture. They fill in the gaps with college interns and volunteers. And they work long hours, including emptying out a hotel and unloading two semitrailers of donated mattresses that showed up on short notice.

The future is rocky. Bridging AZ needs to raise $100,000 to keep operating, replace its fleet of three worn-out trucks, and hire a fundraiser and an operations manager. Until the Piscopos figure out a way to make that happen, Jim says, their optimism keeps them going. "We've done so much with so little for so long, we can now do anything with nothing and still look good doing it."

Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.

VERBATIM

"It was like seeing America build itself back up again. I'll be telling my grandchildren about it."

Arban Nichols, ironworker, on seeing the 408-foot spire added to the top of One World Trade Center on May 10. At a symbolic height of 1,776 feet, the building is the tallest structure in the United States and the third-tallest in the world.

NUTRITION

Pass the crickets

The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization is encouraging people to eat more bugs, specifically grasshoppers and ants, AP reports.

Hoping to limit greenhouse gases and shrink the footprint of livestock farming, a 200-page U.N. report points to insect farming as "one of the many ways to address food and feed security."

"Insects are everywhere and they reproduce quickly," the report explains, adding that insects are an excellent source of protein, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, zinc and fiber.

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CAREERS

Six strategies to ace every job interview

Interviewing, just like the rest of the job search, is very competitive. Here are six things you can do to differentiate yourself from the competition:

■ **Research the company.** Go online and read about the company's culture, products, services and everything else. The more you know, the better able you'll be to answer questions with deep and meaningful answers specific to that organization.

■ **"Meet" the people with whom you'll be interviewing.** LinkedIn is probably your best tool for this. With information about each person and their career, skills and interests, you'll be much more at ease and able to engage in conversation. If they're not on LinkedIn, try Google.

■ **Showcase your successes and achievements.** Most people in the same profession have similar skills and qualifications. To position yourself as the most qualified candidate, focus on what you've accomplished to demonstrate your skills in action, particularly when you can communicate how your actions benefited the company and its financial performance.

■ **Think in bullet points.** There is always a lot of information to share during interviews, and it can be hard to remember it all. If you know you'll be asked about purchasing, then think of three or four "bullets" – the most important things you did in purchasing – and remember them so that you can share those stories. Just as important, it's easier for your interviewer to understand when you say, "I have eight years' experience in purchasing. Three of my largest projects included X, Y and Z."

■ **Be friendly and likable.** The bottom line is that people hire people they like and think will fit into the organization. Put on a smile, offer a firm handshake, and show that you're someone with whom people will enjoy working.

■ **Know your interview objectives.** The only objective of interview No. 1 is interview No. 2. The objective of No. 2 is generally No. 3. Offers take multiple interviews, so be patient.

Wendy Enelow is co-author of "Expert Résumés for Military-to-Civilian Transitions" and "Executive Résumé Toolkit."

WAR ON TERROR

Costly going-away party

$6 billion

Cost to transport tons of weapons, vehicles and other war materiel out of Afghanistan and back to the United States

100,000

Number of outbound combat vehicles

30,000

Number of outbound shipping containers

Sources: *The Hill*, DoD photo

EDUCATION

Military children not eligible for Tillman scholarship

Q: *I am an honorably discharged Vietnam War-era veteran. My daughter is starting at South Dakota State University this fall, and I'd like to apply for the Tillman Military Scholars program on her behalf. Does my veteran status alone make my daughter an eligible applicant, and if so, what kind of criteria are necessary for consideration?*

A: Children are not eligible to apply for the Tillman Military Scholars program. Scholarships are available to military children from the Fisher House Foundation, No Greater Sacrifice, ThanksUSA, the Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation, the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation and some VSOs. Children of servicemembers who died on active duty on or after 9/11 are eligible for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship.

Who is eligible to apply to become a Tillman Military Scholar?

■ Veterans and active-duty servicemembers from all branches of the military, including the National Guard and reserve

■ Spouses of veterans and active-duty servicemembers, including surviving spouses

■ Servicemembers or spouses seeking assistance to pursue an undergraduate, graduate or post-graduate degree as a full-time student at an accredited public or private U.S.-based institution

Find out more about the Tillman Military Scholars program online:

www.pattillmanfoundation.org/tillman-military-scholars

Valerie Heffner, a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona, is a past vice president of the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators. ***askvalerie@legion.org***

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

A first anniversary to remember

Edward Fowler Jr. spent his first wedding anniversary fighting on the beaches of Normandy in France.

The date was June 6, 1944, and Fowler was with the 29th Division on Omaha Beach. "Once we landed, each foot soldier had at least a 75-pound backpack on him, plus the added weight of the water we waded through – all carried while being directly fired upon."

The former infantryman describes the experience as a "savage, dirty, frightening horrible hell."

He recalls the sounds of German machine-gun fire and mortar shells whizzing by. "The days were exhausting, and the nights seemed twice as long, with counterattacks one behind the other. The rain came every day and night. My platoon was the scout platoon for the whole company, and this meant we were to search out and find where the enemy was hiding. We encountered a lot of Germans, with almost hand-to-hand fighting at a close range."

His company successfully claimed the town of St. Lô. "This was a key city to win, as it was the trade center of Normandy. Ten days after landing on the beaches, we were able to take it. But it wasn't until July 18 that we liberated the city and secured it."

About two weeks later, Fowler and about 50 other men in his company were captured by the enemy.

"Our clothes had begun to wear thin, and the soles of our shoes were worn out. We lived on less than 700 calories of watery soup a day, eating it slowly, savoring each bite to make it seem more than it actually was. We were infested with lice; they fed on every part of the body. Dysentery, too, was the order of the day, along with sores breaking out on feet and legs."

Fowler spent nine months as a POW. He was eventually flown to a hospital and then "good old home."

Back in the States, his bride, Wilma, was at work when she learned Fowler was alive. "When she came back to the floor to tell her friends, she started sobbing so hard they thought I'd been found dead."

After returning home to Oklahoma, Fowler farmed his land and raised five children with Wilma. They planned to celebrate their 70th anniversary on June 6.

Read Fowler's full story at the Legion's Honor & Remembrance page:
www.legion.org/honor

"Like" the Legion's new Honor & Remembrance page on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/TheAmericanLegionHonorRemembrance

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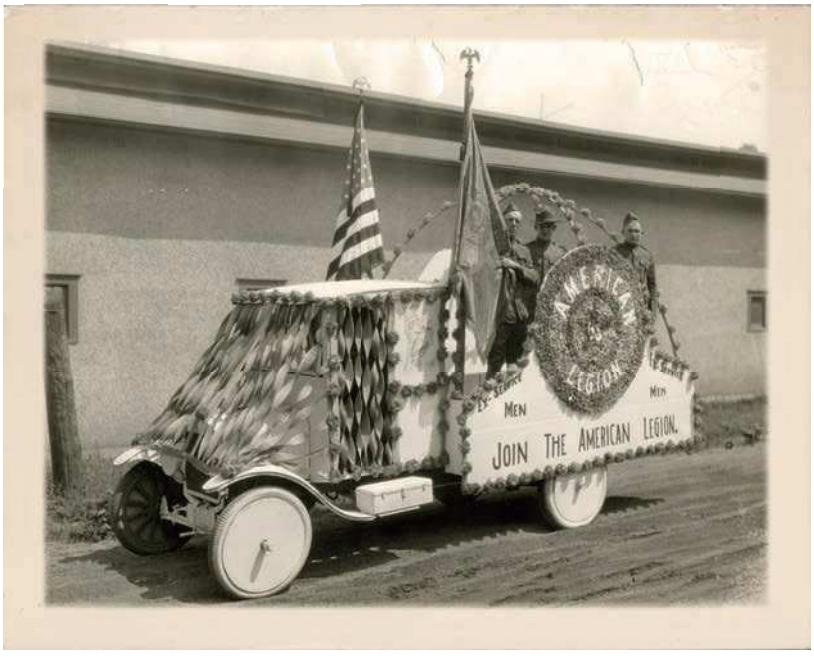


Veterans of the Great War ride in a Fourth of July parade float sponsored by American Legion Post 138 in Havana, Ill., in this undated photo.

ACTIVE DUTY

'What you need in a Marine officer'

Jamie Albonetti wanted to become a Marine just like her grandfather, but she faced a major obstacle to that goal: her weight. Albonetti was 80 pounds overweight, and far too out of shape to make the Marine Corps cut. So, as *Military Times* reports, the University of Memphis senior made a big life change by slashing her daily calorie intake, using the popular "INSANITY" workout DVDs and using a smartphone app to keep track of her calories, which she limited to 1,400 per day.

Albonetti said she didn't contact the Marine Corps until she shed 30 pounds. When she hit that mark, she talked with Capt. Taren Burkett-Sorlie at a recruiting station in Nashville. Burkett-Sorlie encouraged Albonetti to keep working and come back when she was within 10 pounds of her weight-loss goal.

"She went out and did it," Burkett-Sorlie told the *Times*. "That's what you need in a Marine officer."

VERBATIM

"We'll never change the name. It's simple. NEVER – you can use caps."

Daniel Snyder, owner of the Washington Redskins pro football team, when asked if he'd consider changing the team name that American Indians and some others consider racist, even if the Redskins lose an ongoing federal trademark lawsuit

SCOUTING

Connecticut teen Eagle Scout of Year

Mark Chmielewski of Salem, Conn., is the 2013 American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year. A senior at East Lyme High School, he received a $10,000 college scholarship.

For his Eagle Scout project, Chmielewski restored a century-old dam and created an adjacent public park. He volunteers at the Connecticut Veterans' Home and serves as junior vice commander of Sons of The American Legion Squadron 128.

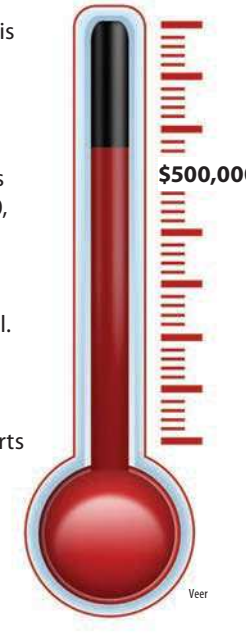
"Service to my community, to my country and to our military is part of who I am," Chmielewski says. "I come from a family that has gravitated to public and military service. We are proud to have more than 200 years of combined membership in The American Legion, SAL and Auxiliary."

Runners-up Chandler Burke of Dallas, Jonathan Chapman of Germantown, Tenn., and Travis Thornburgh of New Virginia, Iowa, received $2,500 scholarships.

TROOP SUPPORT

National Commander Jim Koutz opened the NEC's Spring Meetings by raising his fundraising goal for Operation Comfort Warriors to $750,000. That same day, the Legion's departments donated over $54,000, pushing the total raised during Koutz's year well past his original $500,000 goal.

Koutz has helped personally distribute exercise equipment, gear for adaptive sports programs and other gifts at Fort Carson, Colo., Fort Jackson, S.C., and Fort Gordon, Ga.



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ASK A SERVICE OFFICER

Know eligibility criteria for spouse compensation

Cajun Comeau
Department Service Officer, North Carolina

Q: *Will my spouse still receive money from VA when I pass away?*
A: Money currently paid to the veteran for VA pension or compensation will not continue. However, there may be an entitlement for the surviving spouse or dependent based on the veteran's service.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a monthly benefit paid to eligible survivors whose spouse was either a:

- Servicemember who died on active duty.
- Veteran whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease.
- Veteran whose death resulted from a non-service-related injury or disease; and who was receiving or entitled to receive VA compensation for a service-connected disability rated as totally disabling for at least 10 years immediately before death, or since the veteran's release from active duty and for at least five years immediately before death, or for at least one year before death if the veteran was a former POW who died after Sept. 30, 1999.

The surviving spouse is eligible for DIC if he or she meets one of these requirements:

- Validly married the veteran before Jan. 1, 1957.
- Married to a servicemember who died on active duty.
- Married the veteran within 15 years of discharge from the period of military service in which the disease or injury that caused the veteran's death began or was aggravated.
- Married to the veteran for at least one year.
- Had a child with the veteran and cohabited with the veteran continuously until the veteran's death.
- If separated, was not at fault for the separation and is not currently remarried.

A surviving spouse who remarries on or after Dec. 16, 2003, and on or after attaining age 57, is entitled to continue to receive DIC.

*Do you have a question for Department of North Carolina Service Officer Cajun Comeau about the claims process or veterans benefits in general? Send it to **askso@legion.org**.*

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Justice turned upside down

Accused Fort Hood killer Nidal Hasan has been paid more than $278,000 since his November 2009 shooting rampage, which killed 13 and injured 32 others, NBC's Fort Worth, Texas, affiliate reports.

"Under the Military Code of Justice, Hasan's salary cannot be suspended unless he is proven guilty," according to the Army's response to an NBC 5/KXAS-TV investigation. However, if Hasan had been a civilian DoD employee, he could have been suspended without pay.

To add insult to injury, soldiers wounded in the shooting "are fighting to receive the same pay and medical benefits given to those wounded in combat." The Army has refused to classify the Fort Hood shooting as a terrorist attack and thus has not categorized survivors' injuries as "combat related," according to KXAS.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

New travel savings for Legionnaires

Government Vacation Rewards, an entity specifically designed for government employees and military personnel to save money on their vacations, has been named an authorized provider to The American Legion and is offering a travel discount program to Legionnaires. This discount is the same offered to active-duty military servicemembers.

"The new Member Discount Travel Program powered by Government Vacation Rewards is a great way for Legionnaires to save money on travel expenses, including many additional discount offers for excursions, golf clubs and ski resorts that other programs don't provide," says Greg Roth, director of Membership Support Services at the Legion's National Headquarters in Indianapolis. "The program truly offers the whole vacation package, from airfare to hotel to excursions – a one-stop shop."

There are multiple ways that Legionnaires can save on vacations with the new program:

- Government Vacation Rewards offers the most military discounts on travel anywhere. Get military cruise exclusives, hotel coupons, resort discounts and more.
- Instantly save up to $150 on cruises and resorts with Reward Points.
- Earn Reward Points for every dollar spent on airfare and car rentals to use toward even more savings.

Visit **www.govvacationrewards.com/americanlegion** to create a free account and learn more about how to save money while traveling, or call **(866) 691-5109** to speak with a customer service representative or expert vacation consultant who can assist in planning a trip.

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The rate plans are simple too. Why pay for minutes you'll never use? There are a variety of affordable plans. Plus, you don't have to worry about finding yourself stuck with no minutes– that's the problem with prepaid phones. Since there is no contract to sign, you are not locked in for years at a time and won't be subject to early termination fees. The U.S.-based customer service is knowledgeable and helpful and the phone gets service virtually anywhere in the continental U.S. Above all, you'll get one-touch access to a friendly, and helpful GreatCall operator. They can look up numbers, and even dial them for you! They are always there to help you when you need them.

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MEDIA

'America's newspaper' among Legion's Fourth Estate winners

A Hawaiian television station, *USA Today* and a video on the *New York Times'* website will receive The American Legion's Fourth Estate Award on Aug. 29, at the 95th National Convention in Houston.

For the second time, USA Today *took top honors in the print category.*

Presented annually since 1958 for outstanding achievement in the field of journalism, the award is given in three categories: print, broadcast and new media (Internet).

- **Print** "Ghost Factories," a 14-month investigation of more than 460 forgotten lead-factory sites – including tests of more than 1,000 samples of soil in 21 neighborhoods by *USA Today* reporters Alison Young and Peter Eisler – found significant lead-poisoning risks. The series drew calls for action from seven U.S. senators and has led the Environmental Protection Agency to re-examine health risks at all 464 sites nationwide. More than a dozen states have launched their own investigations.
- **Broadcast** Pamela Young, Rex Von Arnswaldt and Gary Sprinkle of Honolulu's KITV-TV produced a one-hour documentary on the life of Marianne Cope, recently canonized by the Vatican for her work on the Kalaupapa peninsula from 1888 to 1918. Over a period of 80 years, more than 8,000 people were taken from their families and left to die in the leprosy settlements of Kalawao and Kalaupapa. In the 1940s, medication was developed that prevented transmission of leprosy, now called Hansen's disease, and few were exiled to Kalaupapa. Some of the last 17 living patients traveled to Rome for Cope's canonization in October.
- **New media (Internet)** Freelance war correspondent Alex Quade won her second consecutive Fourth Estate Award for "Chinook Down," a video report for the *New York Times* website. Her short documentary revealed the full story and human toll behind a WikiLeaks headline of a Chinook helicopter shot down by a surface-to-air missile in Afghanistan, killing all onboard. Originally scheduled to be on the helicopter, Quade spent five years gathering material on the attack, interviewing pilots who provided air support to rescue teams, and obtaining previously unreleased Pentagon documents via Freedom of Information Act appeals.

Veer

VERBATIM

"We didn't realize he was gifted. We just thought he was like all kids."

Robert Dorman, whose 5-year-old son Gus, with an IQ of 147, is one of the youngest members admitted to Mensa. According to ABC News, Dorman first noticed the boy's advanced intelligence when Gus began reading newspapers and copies of *Wired* while potty training. Now he's memorizing the periodic table of elements and world maps.

✓Yes

✓Yes

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✓Yes

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CONVENTION

What to do in 'Space City'

Be sure to visit The American Legion's National Convention Facebook page to get the latest information on the 95th National Convention and interact with others planning to attend. Local Legionnaires are posting insider's guides to Houston: dining, entertainment, tips for getting around and more.

"Like" the National Convention on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/TheAmericanLegionNationalConvention

2013 National Convention App

Download the 2013 National Convention App for quick access to maps of downtown Houston, hotel listings, a list of convention and commission speakers, and a daily news ticker with schedule updates and other information. The app also includes links to Twitter, the National Convention Facebook page and convention headlines.

Legion Tours

Destination Houston (DH) is the official tour operator for the 95th National Convention. The Legion is uniting with DH to provide guided tour opportunities to destinations in and around Houston. Prices listed are the maximum that will be charged for each tour – final prices are determined based on the total number of attendees, and will be determined 48 hours prior to the scheduled tour.

Friday, Aug. 23

Houston City Tour, departs at 9 a.m., $40
Galveston Island Historic Tour, departs at 10 a.m., $75
Moody Gardens, departs at 10 a.m., $90
Galveston Haak Winery and Texas Seaport Museum, departs at 10 a.m., $84
Space Center Houston, departs at 11 a.m., $57
Shopping Excursion: The Galleria, departs at 1 p.m., $42

Saturday, Aug. 24

Houston City Tour, departs at 9 a.m., $40
Galveston Island Historic Tour, departs at 10 a.m., $75
Moody Gardens, departs at 10 a.m., $90
Space Center Houston, departs at 11 a.m., $57
Shopping Excursion: The Woodlands Market Street, departs at 1 p.m., $48

Sunday, Aug. 25

Houston City Tour, departs at 9 a.m., $40

Monday, Aug. 26

George Bush Presidential Library and Messina Hof Winery, departs at 9 a.m., $85
Houston City Tour, departs at 9 a.m., $40
Galveston Island Historic Tour, departs at 10 a.m., $75
Moody Gardens, departs at 10 a.m., $90
Galveston Haak Winery and Texas Seaport Museum, departs at 10 a.m., $84
Space Center Houston, departs at 11 a.m., $57
Shopping Excursion: The Galleria, departs at 1 p.m., $42

All tours will depart from Street Level in front of Hall E at the George R. Brown Convention Center, on the Avenida de las Americas. A booth will be located at the convention registration desk for last-minute sign-ups.

Register online for a tour:

www.legion.org/convention

Click "2013 Convention Information," then "Tour Opportunities"

American Legion Family Night with the Astros

Major League Baseball's Houston Astros has announced a deal offering specially priced tickets to Legion convention-goers.

The Astros will play the Toronto Blue Jays at Minute Maid Park near the George R. Brown Convention Center and convention hotels at 7:10 p.m. Aug. 23. National Commander Jim Koutz will throw out the first pitch.

Seats are offered in the dugout boxes, field boxes and bullpen boxes at various rates, plus fees and additional taxes. Anyone interested in attending should go online for information on the availability of tickets.

www.astros.com/legion, password: **legion**

Get more convention news and information:

www.legion.org/convention

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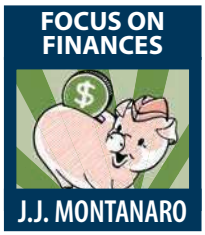
PERSONAL FINANCE

Have 'the talk' about long-term care



Don't tell my boss, but I have to admit that I have a pretty great job. One of the best parts is that I actually get to bust out of the office and meet with hundreds of people at events across the country. I recently attended a Marine Corps spouse symposium, where I was part of a panel that included an elder law attorney and a health-care expert. The topic: planning for the care of aging parents. This is a broad, complicated and often emotional topic, so I thought you might benefit from a recap.

In a nutshell, the planning discussion boiled down to what you could call the four C's:

- **Conversation** Have "the talk," sooner rather than later. It's far better to discuss important topics such as care preferences, goals, and financial resources and requirements well in advance of a crisis. Sure, it could be awkward and uncomfortable, but typically less so than when someone needs care and the topic hasn't been discussed. The payoff will be a clear understanding of what you want to accomplish and who is going to do what.
- **Capability** The costs associated with custodial or supportive care are significant, to say the least. It doesn't matter if the care is provided at home, in an assisted living facility or in a nursing home – it all adds up.

According to a 2012 MetLife study, the national average for nursing home care was roughly $90,000 per year, and the average cost for care in an assisted living facility topped $40,000. Making matters worse, this type of care is not typically covered by Medicare, Medicare supplements or health insurance. In light of these points, exploring available savings and investments, long-term-care insurance and veterans benefits like the Aid & Attendance allowance are all part of determining financial capability. But capability doesn't stop with financial matters. The question also extends to a range of issues, from the ability of family members to provide care to the physical modifications necessary to allow parents to stay in their home. All these issues need to be considered and covered as part of the conversation.

- **Continuity** This is where the assistance of an elder law attorney could be crucial. Establishing a decision-making framework with medical and financial powers of attorney, final care wishes through a living will and a distribution plan are all part of continuity. An elder law attorney can also help families avoid missteps when it comes to Medicaid.
- **Care** This is where the rubber meets the road. Who, what, where, when and how will care ultimately be provided? Is relocation necessary? What role will various family members assume? The ultimate goal: plan for the future rather than trying to fix the present, and get everyone on the same page.

Whether you're on the giving or receiving end of care, you can stave off significant headache and heartache by starting the planning process early.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner for USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

www.legion.org/focusonfinances

VERBATIM

"This war, like all wars, must end. That's what history advises. That's what our democracy demands."

President Barack Obama, in a May 23 speech at National Defense University, saying that the 2001 congressional authorization for use of military force after 9/11 should be revised and repealed. Declaring that al-Qaida is on the road to defeat, he defended drone airstrikes and called again for closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., disagreed, arguing that the war on terrorism is not "winding down," but "morphing."

CAPITOL HILL

Money for nothing

If government waste makes you angry, you may want to skip this news brief. *The Washington Post* reports that the U.S. government is spending some $890,000 on service fees for bank accounts that are inactive or empty. "At last count, Uncle Sam has 13,712 such accounts with a balance of zero," the paper reports.

The accounts are supposed to be closed, but that requires someone to complete the paperwork, which a number of government agencies are failing to do.

Among the government agencies/divisions that have closed the most dead accounts are the National Park Service (all of its 705 empty accounts), Department of Agriculture (74 percent of its empty accounts) and the Department of Health and Human Services (55 percent of its empty accounts).

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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206,** fax **(317) 630-1280,** e-mail **reunions@legion.org** or submit information via our website, **www.legion.org/reunions.**

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, *The American Legion Magazine* will publish a group's listing only once a year.** Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206,** fax **(317) 630-1280** or e-mail **reunions@legion.org.**

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

5th Comm GP 934th Sig Bn, Waukesha, WI, 10/6-12, Chuck Siegismund, (501) 985-1310, sparkyarky@comcast.net; **6th BG VH (Tinian, 1944-1945),** Milwaukee, 10/3-6, William Webster, (651) 345-4575, wbw-ejw@mchsi.com; **18th Ftr Wing 18th Pursuit Grp,** St. Louis, 10/16-20, Tom Chapman, (303) 794-3747, chapman7039@comcast.net; **90th Bomb Sqdn (LN-NI) (Korea),** Palm Springs, CA, 10/16-19, Gary Long, (480) 991-4757, gr190th@cox.net; **93rd BG (H)(VH) (M) (1942-1952),** Hartford, CT, 10/17-20, Jim Guddal, (866) 694-9058, jguddal@yahoo.com; **320th MMS 20th TFW (RAF Wethersfield),** Tucson, AZ, 10/11-13, Paul Baker, (573) 221-5470, 2bakers@gmail.com; **366th TFW Gunfighters,** Dayton, OH, 9/25-29, Paul Jacob, (614) 906-4470, 366fga.dayton2013@gmail.com; **501st/526th TCGs – 501st HQ & HQ Sqdn, 807th TCS, 601st, 602nd, 603rd, 604th, 615th & 616th AC&W Sqdns, 943rd Fwd Air Cntl Sqdn, 555th Sig Aircraft Warning Bn & Spouses,** Wright-Patterson AFB, OH, 9/16-19, Ron Anderson, (701) 293-5473, halron117@aol.com; **764th Radar Sqdn (St. Albans AFS, VT),** St. Albans, VT, 8/16-18, John Hauck, (802) 524-6807, hauck@comcast.net; **6147th Tact Cont Grp "Mosquitos" (Korea),** Nashville, TN, 9/3-8, Hal Prather, (334) 756-3636, malcolm-p@knology.net; **6314th Sec Police Sqdn (Osan AB, Korea, 1968-1969),** San Antonio, 11/9-11, Vincent Darcangelo, (724) 877-9339, darcangelo@adelphia.net; **6952nd Sec Grp (RAF Stn Kirknewton),** Edinburgh, Scotland, 9/18-21, Fred Crawford, (612) 940-8978, phrederic1@aol.com; **Avn Cadet Pilot Tng Class 55-J,** Hondo, TX, 10/8-11, Jim Gibler, (806) 771-5018, jgibler@nts-online.net; **B-24 464th BG 15th AF (Italy),** Colorado Springs, CO, 9/4-8, George Krynovich, (303) 366-0649, gkrynovi@aol.com; **GEEIA-MDA-EI,** Oklahoma City, 10/3-6, James Street, (405) 733-5041, streetjames@att.net

ARMY

1st Sqdn 1st Cav, El Paso, TX, 9/25-29, John Lessick, (419) 586-9449, jlessick@1-1cav.org; **6th Inf Div (All Units & Eras),** Arlington, VA, 9/4-8,

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Russ McLogan, (517) 437-2768, terruspress@dmci.net; **7th Armd Div (WWII),** Cincinnati, 9/18-22, Cheryl Higley, (860) 678-1018, cmhig58@sbcglobal.net; **13th Armd Div "Black Cats" (WWII),** Austin, TX, 9/4-8, Jo Ellen Bender, (630) 355-5332, jebender1520@aol.com; **14th Inf 25th Div (Korean War),** Sharonville, OH, 9/17-20, Bill Simmons, (937) 393-2359, assiddons@cincirr.com; **24th Inf Div Assn,** Louisville, KY, 9/22-25, Gene Spicer, (812) 521-2324, carolynbr@frontiernet.net; **44th Eng Bn "Broken Heart" (Korea, Iraq & Fort Carson, CO),** Atlanta/Marietta, GA, 9/18-21, Joe Sopher, (740) 396-2120, jelesopher@aol.com; **51st Sig Bn Alumni,** Branson, MO, 6/6-8, Tommy Thompson, (817) 326-4773, signal.51st@gmail.com; **77th FA Rgt Assn,** Fernandina Beach, FL, 9/18-21, Paul Guetter, (623) 242-7627, guetterpaul@yahoo.com; **180th Inf Rgt 45th Inf Div,** Oklahoma City, 9/26-29, Eric Hanson, (405) 308-6731, ehanson@ionet.net; **218th MP Co (Vietnam, 1967-1972),** Branson, MO, 9/15-19, Dick Reiter, (307) 362-6599, rireiter@wyoming.com; **240th Bn & All Attached Units (Vietnam),** Branson, MO, 11/5-11, Davis Hoss, (501) 203-5379, hossdavid2462yahoo.com; **509th Eng Co (Panel Bridge) (1965-1972),** Walker, MN, 9/5-8, Jerry Sexton, (405) 373-0354, lindasexton@sbcglobal.net; **577th Eng Bn,** Branson, MO, 9/13-15, Jim Stevens, (910) 579-5704, jrs562@aol.com; **801st Eng Avn Bn,** Branson, MO, 9/5-8, Roger Roop, (937) 426-8434, roger-s-roop@juno.com; **999th Armd FA Bn "Never Die,"** Branson, MO, 9/26-29, John Eichler, (704) 542-2644, eeichler548@att.net; **ASA Herzo Base,** Norfolk, VA, 9/13-15, Al Navarro, (216) 392-5898, alnavarro8@yahoo.com; **B Co 198th Bde Americal Div (1967-1968, Vietnam),** Branson, MO, 10/2-4, Ted Andrews, (973) 383-8970, tandrews078@embarqmail.com; **Bravo Co "No Slack" 2nd Bn 327th Inf 101st Airborne Div (Airmobile) (Vietnam),** Branson, MO, 9/19-21, Lloyd King, (337) 233-9555, lakgolf@aol.com; **Charlie Co 4-3-11 "Old Guard,"** Washington, 9/12-16, Robert Harris, (812) 949-1989, romaharris70@aol.com; **Society of 1st Inf Div "Big Red One,"** Jacksonville, FL, 7/31-8/4, Jen Sanford, (215) 654-1969, soc1id@aol.com

COAST GUARD

***Spencer* (WPG 36/WMEC 905),** Buffalo, NY, 9/20-21, Robert Marzen, (570) 325-4414, marzenh@netzero.net

JOINT

American and Canadian Vets of Essex Scottish Rgt & Kent Rgt, Chatham, Ontario, Field of Valour Dinner, 11/3, Xavier Allen, regimental1@hotmail.com; **Johnson AB, Japan, Vets & Dependents (1946-1962),** San Antonio, 10/3-6, Keith Swineheart, (303) 814-0800, keith.swineheart@gmail.com; **Killeen Base-DASA MP C Co,** Nashville, TN, 9/15-17, Lyle Christy, (931) 920-5650, mchristy926@bellsouth.net

MARINES

2nd Bn 4th Mar, Philadelphia/Valley Forge, PA, 6/26-30, Frank Valdez, (714) 307-4031, stevejckdnls@charter.net; **3rd 8-Inch Howitzer Btry 11th Mar 1st Div,** San Diego, 9/5-8, Dennis O'Brien, (805) 701-1528, obriensequipment@aol.com; **5th Comm Bn (Vietnam),** Nampa, ID, 9/20-23, Jim Beatty, (206) 718-0404, jim.beatty@hotmail.com; **George Co 3rd 1st Mar 1st Mar Div (Sept 1950-Mar 1955),** Dana Point, CA, 9/16-19, Carleton "Bing" Bingham, (775) 265-3596, bingbingham@msn.com; **Mar Corps Tankers Assn,** Mobile, AL, 10/30-11/2, C.R. Casey, (434) 577-2346, casey@telpage.net; **Vietnam Tankers ONTOS,** San Antonio, 10/31-11/4, John Wear, (215) 794-9052, johnwear@yahoo.com; **Waikele Marines (NAD Hawaii),** Branson, MO, 9/18-21, Lanny Rodgers, (814) 425-2425, golfnut2425@windstream.net

NAVY

Abraham Lincoln* SSBN 602,** Minneapolis, 8/23-25, W.T. "Doc" McCance, (860) 464-6758, 11doc@comcast.net; **BMU 2 Expo,** Branson, MO, 9/5-8, Michael Palm, (717) 248-2280, mpalm50@verizon.net; ***Bon Homme Richard* CV/CVA 31 & LHD 6,** Rapid City, SD, 9/12-14, Frank Pulliam, (417) 684-1358; ***Brown* DD 546,** Flagstaff, AZ, 9/23-26, Fred Korzekwa, (317) 578-7736, korzekwaf@sbcglobal.net; ***Cleveland* LPD 7,** Olive Branch, MS, 10/10-13, George Halloway, (334) 491-2222, cpogeorgehalloway@yahoo.com; ***Columbus* CA 74/CG 12/SSN 762,** Branson, MO, 10/2-6, Al Hope, (260) 486-2221, hope4391@frontier.com; ***Fort Snelling* LSD 30,** Warwick, RI, 9/13-16, Dominic Gerand, (516) 443-0888, ci5252@aol.com; ***Greenwich Bay* AVP 41,** Baltimore, 9/26-29, Martin Brown, (910) 582-3791, ussgreenwichbay@gmail.com; ***Gyatt* DD 712/DDG 1**, Jacksonville, FL, 9/15-19, C.F. Turk, (352) 728-3051, dd712ddg1@comcast.net; ***Harry E. Yarnell* DLG/CG 17,** Virginia Beach, VA, 11/9-11, Bill Brewer, (703) 256-1274, bigvtx1800@aol.com; ***Henderson* DD 785,** Fall River, MA, 8/25-29, Albert Meeds, (704) 995-2874, xaramco@carolina.rr.com; ***Hunt* DD 674,** Florence, KY, 9/18-23, Karolyn Edstrom, (502) 243-1051, kyedstrom@gmail.com; ***L.Y. Spear* AS 36,** Jacksonville, FL, 9/4-8, Patty Kelso, (913) 677-1837, pattykelso@usslyspear.org; ***Leary* DD/DDR 879 (1945-1974)**, Milwaukee, 9/11-15, Alfred Redden, (308) 530-1284, alshr@allophone.com; ***Mahan* DD 364/DLG 11/DDG 42 & 72,** Richmond, VA, 10/9-13, Gary White, (281) 890-7823, gankintx@comcast.net; **MCB 7,** Nashville, TN, 9/26-29, Denny Blaisdell, (419) 867-9371, mcb7ra@yahoo.com; ***Menard* APA 201,** Branson, MO, 11/7-13, Leslie Rutherford, (559) 251-8939, lrutherford@aol.com; ***Midway* CV 41,** San Diego, 9/12-14, Jim Hayter, (703) 264-0542, mva41vpr@comcast.net; ***Mount McKinley* AGC/LCC 7 (1944-1970),** Portland, OR, 9/18-21, Dwight Janzen, (509) 534-3649, djanzen4@msn.com; ***Newport* LST 1179,** Wabeno, WI, 9/4-8, Ray Batiato, (540) 239-0159, batman@swva.net; **NMCB-3 (All Eras),** Port Hueneme, CA, 9/19-22, Jack Davis, (606) 546-8491, nmcb3vra@hotmail.com; ***Observer* MSO 461,** Charleston, SC, 10/17-20, Rick Davies, (603) 286-8856, drill49@metrocast.net; ***Piedmont* AD 17,** SeaTac, WA, 9/25-29, Bill Kastens, (785) 272-2604, bmk1930@sbcglobal.net; ***Pursuit* AGS 17,** Myrtle Beach, SC, Arlie Wooters, (302) 542-5056, arlie312@comcast.net; ***Rendova* CVE 114,** Branson, MO, 10/7-11, Chuck Fecay, (313) 565-1515, cfecay@att.net; ***Sample* FF 1048,** Norfolk, VA, 9/26-29, Dina Coffey, (828) 256-6008, dina@mlrsinc.com; ***Sea Cat* SS 399,** Chattanooga, TN, 10/7-11, Edwin Hymer, (515) 981-3006, ednmeg@mchsi.com; ***Spencer, Cheektowaga, NY, 9/19-22, Bob Marzen, (570) 325-4414, marzenh@netzero.net; ***Stoddard,*** Herndon, VA, 9/4-7, Bill Melyan, (732) 269-5416, keystonewillie@verizon.net; **VA-115 (1948-1953),** Wichita, KS, 9/5-7, Joe LeBlanc, (870) 404-8605, joeleb147@suddenlink.net; ***Valcour* AVP 55/AGF 1,** Virginia Beach, VA, 9/26-29, Don Cloud, (843) 552-9992, dwcloudsr@gmail.com; **VC-12/VAW-12,** Orlando, FL, 10/24-27, Richard Bray, (585) 576-0595, leighbray@hotmail.com; ***Wasp* CV 18/LHD 1 & Air Grps,** San Antonio, 9/30-10/4, Walt Pinegar, (936) 291-0228, wpinegar2@gmail.com; ***West Virginia* BB 48,** San Diego, 9/20-22, Anthony Reiter, (651) 483-8627

COMRADES IN DISTRESS

***Lenawee* APA 195 & *Princeton* LPH 5 (Mar 1962-Feb 1965).** Carol Bunyan seeks witnesses to verify a claim that Thomas Bunyan set foot in Vietnam. CID 1500

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93rd BG (VH)(M) (Castle AFB, 1946-1952), Jim Guddal, (866) 694-9058, jguddal@yahoo.com

591st Eng Co (LE) (Vietnam, 1966-1972), Ken Kiel, (414) 529-7731, kcconst@wi.rr.com

925th Eng Grp 813th EAB B Co SCARWAF (Elmendorf AFB, Anchorage, AK, 1953-1955), Peter Mustos, (208) 766-2965

1615th Support Sqdn (Wheelus AB, Tripoli, Libya, 1960-1963), Dan DeBrase, (978) 462-1525, debrased@yahoo.com

2085th Eng Firefighting Plt (Barrackpore, India, 1944-1946), Robert Nolan, (609) 296-9503

B Co 322nd Sig Bn (Germany, 1951-1953), W. Hothan, P.O. Box 1058, New Hyde Park, NY 11040

***Carpenter* DD 825 (Aug 1977-Feb 1981),** Michael Weston, (925) 686-6707, mnsweston@yahoo.com

***Ethiopia* AO 1 (1962-1963),** Stan Ellexson, (510) 223-4420, stanellexson@aol.com

Heli Cbt Support Sqdn 6 (NAS Norfolk, VA, Feb 1967-Oct 1968), Mike Quintavalle, (561) 543-8099, lynnquint@hotmail.com

Lakenheath Eagles Football Teams (RAF Lakenheath, England, 1964-1965), Tom Maxwell, (785) 738-7502, maxwellhouse@nckcn.com

MACV Advisory Team 21 (Pleiku, Vietnam, 1967), Ken Kraft, (516) 429-6174, kkraft6@yahoo.com

***Marias* AO 57 (1965-1968),** Rodney Ratliff, (812) 896-1281, rodneyratliff62@yahoo.com

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Parachute Material School (Corpus Christi, TX, 1943), Maurice Greif, (865) 354-9857, mpg31124@comcast.net

PATSU 2-1 (Midway Island, Pacific, 1943-1945), Maurice Greif, (865) 354-9857, mpg31124@comcast.net

Plt 376 (MCRD San Diego, Aug-Oct 1954), Gerald Goerlitz, (484) 678-3415, nmu62@ptd.net

RF-4C Photo Trps (1965-1993), David Castaneda, (512) 280-0754, divotcas@gmail.com

TAPS

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John S. Brukner, Dept. of Texas. Dept. Cmdr. 1993-1994, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1987-1991 and 1992-1993, and Nat'l Law & Order Cmte. Advisory Board Memb. 1981-1983 and 1986-1990.

Walter S. Bull Jr., Dept. of Texas. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1987-1995 and Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1985-1987.

Ben B. Halterman, Dept. of North Carolina. Dept. Cmdr. 1961-1962, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1964-1965, Nat'l Education & Scholarships Cmte. Memb. 1956-1957, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1965-1966, Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1974-1975 and 1976-1984, and Nat'l Resolutions Assignment Cmte. Memb. 1984-2008.

Charles H. "Hal" Manson, Dept. of Montana. Dept. Cmdr. 1984-1985, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1985-1987, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1987-1989, Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Memb. 1990-1999, Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1978-1985, Nat'l Sec. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1988-1989 and Nat'l Public Relations Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1987-1988.

Roger J. Melville, Dept. of North Carolina. Dept. Cmdr. 1990-1991 and Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1986-1988.

Frank T. Rose, Dept. of North Carolina. Dept. Cmdr. 1991-1992 and Nat'l Military Affairs Cmte. Consultant 1989-1994.

George H. Willis Sr., Dept. of North Carolina. Dept. Cmdr. 1999-2000, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1997-2000 and Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2003-2007.

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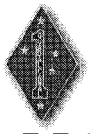
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I'm pretty close to being a millionaire – just seven figures away.

A FATHER took his son on a tiger hunt. As they were creeping through the weeds, the father said, "Son, this hunt marks your passage into manhood. Do you have any questions?"

"Just one," the boy replied. "When the tiger kills you, how do I get home?"

I ALWAYS WANTED to be somebody, but I guess I should have been more specific.

A MAN answered a knock at his door and found a snail on his doorstep. He picked it up and threw it into the garden. Two years later, another knock at his door revealed the same snail on the doorstep, asking angrily, "What was that all about?"

A COUPLE was late in leaving to go on a trip, so the wife told her husband, "Run ahead, dear, and hold the train."

"OK," the husband replied with a huff. "What hold do you want me to use: the headlock, the scissors or the half-nelson?"

THERE'S SO MUCH anger in the world. Why, just yesterday, a tire on a used car kicked me.

A PROUD MOTHER told one of her friends, "My daughter's marrying a second lieutenant."

The friend replied, "How'd the first get away?"

A WOMAN said to a lost child she met in the park, "What's your name, sweetheart?"

"Connor," the boy replied.

"Can you tell me your full name?"

The boy thought for a second, then replied, "Connor Stop That."

"Not bad, kid, but you'd be vulnerable to attacks here and here."

"We met in your store years ago, and I figured this would be easier than a divorce."

WHY NOT have your cake and eat it too? It's cake. What else are you going to do with it?

MY COOKING is so awesome that even the smoke alarm cheers me on!

A MINISTER visiting a large city spoke at a banquet on the night of his arrival, and told several anecdotes that he expected to repeat at meetings the next day. He asked reporters to kindly omit the anecdotes from their stories.

A new reporter's coverage included the line, "The minister told a number of stories that cannot be published here."

"AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL here in New York City has become the first school in the country to serve only vegetarian food. Apparently the school board wants to give kids a head start in being difficult at restaurants." – *Jimmy Fallon*

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GRANUFLO IN DIALYSIS PATIENTS

We have learned from a series of investigations that GranuFlo, an alkaline substance given to dialysis patients to neutralize the acid that builds up in the blood, can increase serious health risks associated with dialysis.

GranuFlo Recall
In June 2012, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a Class I recall of GranuFlo Dry Acid Concentrate and Naturalyte Liquid, a dialysis product used in the treatment of acute and chronic renal (kidney) failure during hemodialysis. **Class I recalls are used for dangerous or defective products that may cause serious health problems or even death.**

GranuFlo, manufactured by Fresenius Medical Care, has been found to contain far more acetate than rival products, resulting in elevated bicarbonate levels – a significant risk factor for cardiac arrest in dialysis patients.

If you or a loved one has experienced a cardiac event, stroke, or death following the use of GranuFlo, then you may be entitled to compensation. The Branch Law Firm, a nationally known law firm, is handling these types of cases and specifically representing clients on a national basis regarding GranuFlo. Call for a confidential interview, **1-800-828-4529** or **1-800-243-3534** and visit our website at **www.branchlawfirm.com**.

Turner W. Branch, a principal and senior partner of the Branch Law Firm, retired as a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1968. He served on active duty in Camp Pendleton, California and at the Marine Corps Air Facility (MCAF) in Santa Ana, California. While at Camp Pendleton he served with the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (FMF) USMC.

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If you, a family member, or a loved one has bladder cancer and has ACTOS®, you may be entitled to compensation. Please **contact the Branch Law Firm**, a well-known national law firm that has been in business over 45 years, for a **free initial interview** and **consultation**.

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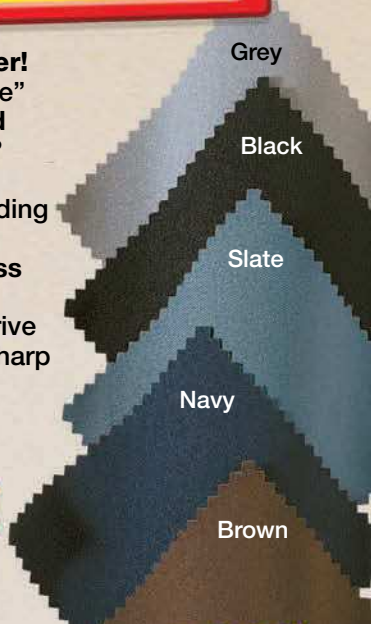

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